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A NOVEL.

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CHAPTER XLVII.*

HERBERT passed a day of terrible uneasiness as hope or fear alternated in his breast, at one moment anticipating every chance footstep that approached the house was that of Meg or Natty, and at the next fearful that the door should open and disclose the figure of his old persecutor Rudd. Neither however came, and gradually the time stole on until noon was passed, and the poor landlady laid the cloth for dinner. He could not help noticing as she did so, that her gaze was fixed at times mournfully upon himself, and this was more than sufficient to deprive him of his slender appetite.

"Are you ill, boy?" demanded Bayles, with surly kindness, as the boy hung his head and declined the greasy mess he placed before him, and for a moment a kindly look was visible on the black, deeply lined visage; "if so, say the word at once, and you shall go to bed."

Herbert's head was aching terribly, and there was a feverish bloom on his wasted cheeks that attracted even the attention of a man so habitually careless of any one but himself, as this worthy

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individual ; yet the boy durst not venture to acknowledge himself to be ill, lest he should destroy his hope of assistance from Meg, but endeavoured to eat his dinner. The first mouthful, however, was more than sufficient to satisfy him, and with an involuntary shudder he shoved the plate away, and supporting his head with his hands, endeavoured to bear patiently the aching pangs that were beginning to torture his frame.

A slow fire seemed to be consuming his very vitals—his head felt in a blaze—his eyes were dull and glazed—his breast throbbed again as he pressed his hands against it—a horrible despair seized upon him at this juncture ; the fever from which he had scarcely yet escaped, aggravated by the exposure to wet and cold, and increased by the terror and grief of mind his capture by Rudd and Bayles had occasioned, was upon the boy once more.

With every hour he became worse—Bayles had fallen asleep on the settle after dinner, so that for a time he escaped notice ; but at length the man awoke and looked up, and not immediately discovering Herbert, who was lying in a dark corner, as far removed from the fire as possible, sprang up with an oath as he imagined that the boy had taken that opportunity to escape.

“ Oh, you are there, are you,” he exclaimed, as Herbert, terrified by his vehemence, attempted to jump to his feet. “ Stand up ! ”

Herbert attempted to do so, and sank down again all in a heap at his feet.

“ What is the matter—are you ill, or only shamming ? ” demanded Bayles, who was only kind to the boy through opposition to Rudd, and who, now that the latter was out of the way, could be savage and brutal enough. “ Hist ! do you hear me ? ”

“ I am afraid I am ill, sir,” faltered the boy, who could scarcely articulate the words.

“ Here, my good woman,” cried the man, making the house ring again with the hoarse tones of his voice ; and the landlady appeared.

“ Carry this boy to bed, and give him something warm to drink, and give him plenty of pap to keep the heat in him—I can see he’s in a high fever, poor fellow ! ” and he turned over on the settle and began to snore again.

The melancholy drudge motioned to Herbert, and then for the first time aware of his helplessness, took him up in her arms and carried him up stairs into a meanly furnished room, where there was a small bed without curtains.

“ Poor little fellow, how hot his skin is ! ” thought she, as Herbert lay helpless as an infant on her lap as she undressed him. “ Dear, dear ! how I wish Meg would come back again, or

send Natty here—this poor boy can never go forward with those cut-throats to get his death so soon.”

She paused for a moment to listen, but no sound of approaching footsteps was audible, and sighing once more she completed her operations by dressing him in an old nightgown, and taking him up in her arms laid him tenderly in the bed, and covered him up with the clothes.

“I am very ill,” whispered the boy with his feeble voice, motioning her to stoop down to catch what he said, “so don’t let them take me away from dear Meg.”

“I wont! I wont!” sobbed the poor meek thing, eyeing him with her great mournful eyes; “and now, go to sleep, do.”

Herbert smiled, and whispered something which she could not catch, and then the woman stole out of the room and crept down stairs, lest Bayles should awake and come to see what she was about; and Herbert, closing his eyes, attempted to fall asleep.

An hour after, when she stole upon tiptoe, he was still awake. First she heard him muttering and laughing to himself; something in the tones of his voice, or in the laugh itself, which was a very wild and unnatural one, induced her to go to his bedside, and there was Herbert lying, his hands tightly clasping his head, stretched across the bed, the clothes thrown off him, and huddled in a heap upon the floor.

“What is the reason of this?” she demanded, angrily, startled for a moment out of her usual hopeless indifference. “Did I not cover you nicely up, to keep you warm?”

The boy gibbered, and made mouths at her, as she advanced towards him, and then clasped his head still more tightly.

“Poor thing, he’s quite beside himself,” said she, in a commiserating tone. “What shall I do if Meg does not come soon?”

She sate down to think, out of reach of the boy, for, somehow, she dreaded those wild, brilliant eyes, and distorted features. “These men, I can see, are nothing better than two thieves, if not worse;” and she involuntarily shuddered, and then, as a new thought struck her, started to her feet, crept noiselessly to the door, and locked it. She was secure now, for the house was old, and very substantially built, and the door would have defied twenty men to have forced it.

A feeling of security succeeded, which was, alas, of short duration. True, the boy and herself were safe, but that was but poor comfort for a poor creature like herself, who had to live by her own exertions. She had left everything exposed to the tender mercies of her two robber-guests, and she had but little doubt that they would take signal vengeance on her little wealth in the lower rooms, if she once ventured to oppose their

will with respect to the poor insensible little fellow lying before her.

For a moment, her prudential ways got the better of her terror and sympathy, and she was half way across the room, to unlock the door once more, when the sight of Herbert moaning, and sobbing, and singing, by turns, recalled her better thoughts, and, with a deep sigh, she sate down near the window, determined to await patiently whatever might befall her.

The window unfortunately did not command a view of the road immediately in front of the house, so that she had not even the miserable consolation of watching for the approaching aid; one end of the house jutted out so far, as entirely to shut out the prospect,—the only object visible being the sort of paved yard fronting the house itself.

It was fast growing dark, and still nothing stirred, either within or without the house. Rudd had not yet returned, and Bayles evidently still slept, or he would, long ere this, have been up stairs, to see how Herbert fared. This respite, however, could not, she was convinced, be of long duration; and having now, by a great effort, subdued her terror, she quietly and sensibly proceeded to make such arrangements as lay in her power, to increase the security of her retreat.

With this end in view, she, by help of a heavy chest of drawers, barricaded the door, although she knew from past experience, that it was more than sufficient of itself to resist any ordinary assault; and, taking one of the sheets from the bed, hung it up in front of the window. She had barely done this, before she heard a noise down below, and presently she heard Bayles stumbling up the dark stairs, bawling out as he came, to know where she was.

She pressed her hands over her bosom, as if to still the palpitation of her heart, and remained immovable in her chair. Herbert, fortunately, was laying in a fit of exhaustion in the bed, and did not move, when the ruffian thundered upon the door, accompanying his salute by a volley of threats and curses, which made her blood run cold to hear.

Then she heard him stumble along into the adjoining attic, which was soon searched, and then return again to batter against the door, with no better effect. She even smiled, as he went grumbling down stairs again, for her courage was beginning to revive, and then, fearing that the boy might be alarmed by the uproar, she drew off her shoes, and crept into bed beside him, folding him tenderly in her arms, with the hope of lulling him to sleep.

There was now a silence of several minutes, which, however, like the stillness of nature immediately preceding a storm, only

foreboded the hurricane that was to follow. A quarter of an hour had scarcely elapsed before she knew by the increased uproar and commotion, that Rudd had returned; and now, trembling with real terror, she drew the boy closer to her, and awaited, with speechless agony, what was to follow.

She had not to remain long in doubt. Up stairs they came, like a leash of baffled sleath hounds, foaming, cursing, and howling out their threats of vengeance and destruction.

"Open the door, you jade!" cried Rudd, in the low, hissing voice that characterised him when thoroughly roused. "Do you hear?" and a perfect volley of blows followed the adjuration; "open the door, you hag, or I'll blow it down about your ears."

She trembled violently, but did not move. She knew they would probably murder her if she admitted them even now, and she knew as well that the strength of the door itself, barricaded as it was, would be more than a match for all their strength—murmuring for help from God, she once more clasped the boy in her arms, and listened with sickening terror, the course of events.

Rudd's voice now rose loud in the unwonted silence that had followed all this uproar,—“We must force the door somehow, Bayles. Is there never a bed-post or a poker to get about the place?”

“There's a bed in the next room,” rejoined the other, with a surly laugh. “If you will lend a hand, we can manufacture a lever or two out of it, in no time.”

She heard Rudd follow his confederate into the little attic, and knew the next moment, by the crash that ensued, that they had wrenched away the poles from the bed. They were back again in a moment; and then, applying their herculean strength to the door, with the assistance of the new weapons they had thus possessed themselves of, attempted to force a passage.

She had involuntarily sat up in bed, as this new and formidable antagonist was brought against her, and for a moment she gave herself up for lost, and a shrill cry unconsciously burst from her as she saw the hinges strain and heave, as thrust followed thrust, in rapid succession. All was, however, in vain; the house had been built in an epoch when work was made to last, and triumphantly did it defy all their efforts.

“Let us burn the hag in her den!” growled Rudd, loud enough for her to hear, and the next moment they were in the little attic again, to fetch the wreck of the bed and one or two rickety chairs, which was all the furniture it contained.

She listened with breathless terror, expecting that they would pause again, with their spoil at the door, but they did not;

they went on, trailing the heavy poles down the narrow stairs, and presently she heard them cursing and laughing on the pavement without. Then she heard a hurried running to and fro between the kitchen and the yard, and, unable to restrain her curiosity, she again crept out of bed, and peeped behind the blind.

A thrave or two of straw was lying in a loose heap immediately beneath the window, on which were placed a few chairs and other light pieces of furniture. She had barely noticed this, when Rudd ran out from the house with a shovel-full of red-hot cinders, which he threw into the midst: the whole was in a blaze in a moment, and with a wild huzza that made her flesh creep, the ruffians dispersed in search of more materials to feed the flames.

One by one, she saw tables and chairs, a rickety old dresser, and a few books, her homely household goods, cast forth to the devouring element. She was almost too heart-broken to see more, had not a strange indefinable curiosity chained her to her post to watch out the issue of the catastrophe.

The fire was burning low, for everything that was easily removed had been cast into the flame, when by some chance, Bayles espied a long ladder lying in the little yard behind the house.

"This will make a capital blaze!" he cried, staggering beneath the weight of it. "Here, bear-a-hand, you lazy brute! we will make the old lady refurnish her establishment, at any rate."

Rudd's face was turned, so that she could mark the workings of his countenance at the moment, and she was sure from the expression she beheld there, that something more than the joy of feeding the fire, called up the look of triumphant hatred she saw depicted in it.

"Bring that hatchet forward, and chop it up!" cried Bayles, gleefully; "it will keep the fire in a blaze for half-an-hour, this will."

"Hist! be quiet, and wait one moment," said Rudd, in a low voice, glancing up at the window; "we can put that to another purpose, fool!"

"What's got into that brain of yours now, Rudd?" asked Bayles, gazing stupidly at him.

"Here, help me to hoist it up to that window, if it will reach as far," said Rudd, sternly; "we will soon unearth the old fox;" and then with a loud huzza, it rose quivering in the air, paused for a moment, and then sank slowly against the opposite wall, the top ring reaching, alas, just midway across the casement.

She shrieked out in her terror, and sank down on her knees, sickened with fear, for there was no hope for her now. Rudd was half way up the ladder already, and once more strong in her despair, she rose up as a bright thought flashed through her brain. She saw a dense, dark mass of human beings advancing up the road, although they were still a quarter of a mile or so distant, and the sight of aid so near at hand, and which was yet too far away to be effectual, nerved her hands. She waited until his head was on a level with the window, and then flinging it open, she hurled the ladder from the wall, and was only conscious of a loud yell, followed by a dull heavy fall, as she sank down all insensible by the chair near which she had stood to perform the feat.

When she came to herself the room was full of light, and crowded with people. Meg was supporting her in her arms, whilst an old gentleman with silvery hair, and a complexion like winter berries, was holding some pungent aromatic to her nostrils.

"Dear heart alive, do look up, and say you're better," cried Meg's cheery voice, as she opened her eyes. "We all thought you were dead when we first got into the room. Now do look up, Alice dear!" and the honest little woman fairly went off into strong hysterics.

The poor creature shuddered, and shrank away from the strange crowd that seemed to swim around her. "Where am I?" she asked, in a feeble tone, looking in a bewildered way around her.

"Why, where should you be, but in your own house, Alice woman?" cried Meg, who had rallied wonderfully quick, and was now hugging her, might and main. "Where should you be, but in your own house, with Natty and Meg, and all these gentlemen, to be sure?"

"Oh! what a frightful dream I have had, then," cried the poor creature, sinking back, all in tears, in Meg's arms. "I dreamt some one was attacking the house, Meg, and that they had burned all my poor bit of furniture, and that——"

"It was no dream, Alice woman," retorted Nell, quickly, "but all over true, my brave heart."

"You are a noble, daring-hearted woman!" said a majestic-looking gentleman she had not yet seen. "No man could have behaved more nobly, and I shall consider it my duty to reward you hereafter for it."

Was she in a dream still, or could some wonderful good fortune have happened, that a poor timid creature like her could be thus addressed? Presently some one cried out "Where is Gyde?"

"Down below, guarding the prisoner," responded a rough, deep voice.

"Is the man badly hurt?" demanded the same voice.

"Very bad indeed: he has never spoken since they lifted him up, but Gyde says he thinks his back must be broken."

"Go down, some of you, and help Gyde. Here! clear the room of all but Mrs. Gyde and this good woman:" and she saw them all disappear with the exception of Meg, the white-haired old gentleman, a very handsome young man, who had all this while sat at the head of the bed, apparently absorbed in watching the boy, and the stately and imposing looking man who had promised her his protection.

The old gentleman and the latter stood for several minutes in the centre of the floor, talking earnestly in some foreign language; and in the meanwhile Meg stole up to her side, and whispered cheerily, "Don't be afeard, Alice woman, for they're all real gentlefolks, and very kind they are. The old gentleman do say you shall be a rich woman for life, so don't fret about the bit duds those cut-throats burned, for it will all be made up to you."

"And the man, dear Meg?" she asked, clasping Meg's fat chubby hand in her own. "Is he alive?—Is he much hurt?"

"Terrible!" answered Meg, with a shudder. "Oh! what a turn it gave me when we got up and saw him lying all in a heap, without either shape or life amost in him.—But what has become of the other one?"

"Why, are there not two?" cried Alice, clasping her hands.

Meg shook her head. "We only found one when we got here."

"Then the other has run away, for there were two.—And who are these gentlemen, and what do they want here?"

"Hush! some wonderful great people, surely. Yon handsome youth sitting by the bed is something akin, I fancy, to that poor little fellow there; at least we guess so from what they said when they first came to our house, and got me to lead them here."

"And the boy?" demanded Alice, fixing her large, mournful eyes upon her.

"Is richer than any of them; but whist! here they come:" and Meg drew herself up, and dropped a curtsy, as the old gentleman's companion paused before them.

He regarded them both for several minutes in silence, running his gaze from the one to the other alternately. His gaze rested longest on Alice, and it was to her he spoke at last.

"You have done a great service, my good woman, to one who never forgets either a benefit or an injury. Tell my friend

here," pointing to his grey-haired companion, "when you are more sufficiently yourself, what are your wishes, and he will religiously perform them. In the meantime accept this as an earnest of what is to follow," and he held out a purse, through the silken meshes of which shone the gleam of gold.

"If you please sir, Meg told me first how shamefully those wretches had treated the dear boy, and Meg, therefore, deserves your bounty more than I do," she cried, timidly. "Give it to Meg, if you please, sir."

"But I do not please," he cried, with a frown that made her tremble—"I give you this money as an earnest of future gratitude on my part, and as such, you must accept it in spite of all the Megs in the world;" and with a rough gesture, he thrust it into her hand.

"As for you, mistress Meg, as you are a contumacious little baggage, that is neither good to drive or lead, I shall treat with my faithful ally, master Natty, about you, and shall only demand a kiss in token of future friendship;" and with a peculiar smile, that puzzled poor Alice more than all the rest, he snatches a kiss from the pouting lips of the blacksmith's plump little wife, before she had well made up her mind whether to refuse it or not.

He then went down stairs, leaving his grey-headed old friend to rejoin the young man at the boy's side.

"Do you think he will live?" demanded the latter in a low, earnest voice, as soon as he saw who it was.

"The issues of life and death are in the hands of God," was the solemn rejoinder—"Go down below now, Mr. Cecil, and leave Herbert to my care."

Cecil stooped down and kissed the hot, throbbing brow, and pressing the good old doctor's hand, left the room in silence, without noticing the two women.

"Alice, woman! had we not better go down stairs, and see if we can be of any service," cried Meg, after a pause; "they may be wanting something to eat, and the ways of the house is strange to every one but yourself;" and then seeing that she was all in a tremble still, she took her by the arm and led her from the room.

Everything below was in the greatest confusion, for the two ruffians had dragged everything they could lift out to the front to feed the fire; one huge table, however, had defied all their efforts, and on this, the crushed and mutilated body of the miserable Rudd now lay to all appearance dead.

Meg stole up to Natty's side, and gazed with sad composure on the awful spectacle before her. The face was upturned, disclosing one or two frightful gashes over the temples, and had

already assumed the purple tinge, which in cases of that nature is the forerunner of death, whilst the clothes were saturated with blood.

"An hour ago," said Dalton, with mournful sternness, "how daring was the heart that beat within that breast, and how powerful for evil was that frame which now lies senseless as the clod of the valley! His sins be on his own head!" and bowing his head, the half-brother left the little group, and passed out into the open air.

An hour after, he sent a message up to Doctor Rivers, to say that his carriage was at the door, and that if he thought Herbert could be removed with safety, it would be better to effect that at once. Doctor Rivers, however, would not endanger the safety of his patient by running the risk of a removal, and so Dalton set off alone, Cecil obstinately refusing to be separated from Herbert, by whose side he had once more taken up his watch.

The boy was now, however, in a raging fever, and all through that terrible and sleepless night, age and youth hung over his lowly pillows, scarcely daring to breathe even to themselves the grief and despair that brooded, like some hideous nightmare, on their hearts—Very terrible was it to them both to hearken to the wild ravings which the mortal agony upon him, wrung from one so gentle, so tender, and so meek as poor Herbert; and still more terrible was it to look into each others' eyes, and behold the reflection of the terror and despair that preyed upon the soul of both.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

DALTON did not sleep that night. By midnight he was in London, to secure a hurried interview with his solicitor, who had to be called out of bed for the purpose; and, by the first grey dawn of morning, his silent form once more stood by the young boy's bed.

"He is no worse," was all the reply he could wring from the tireless and excellent old man; "be of good heart, my dear friend! God surely has not restored him to us merely to deprive us of the blessing again."

Dalton sighed, and stole from the room. Descending the stairs, he entered the kitchen, his eye immediately resting on the table we have already mentioned as that on which Rudd was laid, when he was brought into the house. Dalton shud-

dered as he beheld a white cloth spread over it, beneath which something massy and bulky was deposited; and, on removing one end, the face of the wretched being, grisly and repulsive even in death, was upturned to his own. He covered it up hastily again, and was about to leave the room, when Cecil, wan with his night vigils, stole in from a hurried walk.

"What do you think of Herbert?" he asked, with forced calmness.

"He is decidedly not worse than when I left, last night," was the prompt reply. "My dear Cecil, do not give way to despair. With God's good blessing, I trust, Herbert will still be spared to us."

Cecil sighed, and advanced towards the stairs.

"When did *he* die?" asked Dalton, pointing to the table where the body was lying.

"During the night, I believe."

"Did he ever recover consciousness?"

"I believe not: there was no one with him when he died."

"Not even the woman of the house?"

"No: she was frightened; and our friend Gyde and his wife took her to their own house for the night. Some one was saying that they found his mother, I believe it was, lying dead in bed when they got there, and that she was this villain's mother as well."

"Good heavens!" ejaculated Dalton, as a suspicion of the truth rushed into his mind. "Gyde and Rudd brothers!"

"What is the matter?" asked Cecil, noticing his agitation; "do you know these people—this villain?"

"Go up to Doctor Rivers, my dear Cecil, until my return. I will not be above an hour at most," said Dalton, who was evidently deeply moved, and the next moment he was fifty yards from the house."

"It is—it must be—as I have all along suspected," was his inward soliloquy, as he strode forward in the direction of the smith's house; "this Gyde is the son of the miserable and guilty woman whom my no less guilty sire tempted from her rectitude and virtue. Gyde, Gyde," he muttered, as if striving to recall the name to his memory, "Gyde it surely was, or I'm a drivelling fool. And this man's father shot mine, and expiated his crime, if crime it were, on the scaffold. I will unravel this tangled web of misery and crime, in which the innocent and the guilty suffer alike," and he again strode rapidly forward.

Within a quarter of an hour he came in sight of Natty's house, and, had not his mind been already pre-occupied, he could not have failed to note what a beautiful picture the quaint old house, all ivied and garlanded with roses, the little croft in

front, with its velvet carpet of turf, and the dark, solemn woods stretching away on all sides, formed to delight the eye of the lover of nature.

He lifted the latch and entered, instinctively doffing his hat, for there was something in the unwonted solemnity of Natty and Meg which excited his sympathy in spite of himself. Natty had not been at the forge that day, as was evident by the suit of decent yet homely mourning which he wore, and which he only assumed on very solemn occasions like the present.

The smith had risen, and was now standing midway on the floor. Dalton paused a moment to admire the wide girth of chest, the fine, stern head, placed so firmly and strongly on the shoulders, and the long and sinewy limbs, which were disclosed to their fullest advantage by the unwonted dress which Natty wore. Gyde, on his part, paid a silent homage to the dignified grace and commanding features of his visitor, who now hastened to break the silence by saying—

“I trust you will not consider me intrusive, friend, by coming to see you at the present time, when affliction, I understand, has visited your dwelling.”

“You are welcome, honoured sir,” was Natty’s simple response. “As you say, affliction has indeed come amongst us, and that, too, at a time when we were but ill prepared for it.”

“I learned, on returning to the place where I parted with you yesterday, on reaching there this morning, that that miserable being has at last ended his career of guilt.”

Natty’s voice trembled slightly as he responded, “May God forgive him! With your permission, sir, I will take steps to have an inquest held over the body, and then decently inter it at my own expense.”

“So,” thought Dalton, “my suspicions are well founded, after all. Now for the old woman!” and then, turning his dark eye on his simple ally, he said, kindly, “I understand you have just lost your mother, Mr. Gyde.”

“We have, please your honour,” said Meg, dropping a curtsy; “she went off very sudden at last, sir.”

“Go and look after Nan, wife,” said the smith, significantly; and, as Meg bustled away at her husband’s bidding, he went on, with a dash of sternness in his manner, “My mother, sir, was a peculiar woman, and one quite out of the common way, as one might say, for she had been brought up with the quality, and had learned their ways over much, perhaps, for her own peace.”

“You raise my curiosity, and, if it is not intruding upon your grief, my honest friend, I should like to see her,” said Dalton.

Natty's face darkened over in a moment, and Dalton almost started, so sudden was the transformation he beheld; and he almost repented his curiosity when he noted the distrust and suspicion Natty's manner instantly betrayed.

"I am sorry, sir, I cannot comply with your wish. We are only simple people, and, as such, have scarcely a right to refuse to humour the whims of our betters. My poor mother is gone now, but her scarcely cold remains shall not be exposed to the gaze of vulgar curiosity."

It was Dalton's turn now to look angry and distrustful, yet he did neither; he extended his hand, exclaiming, "Excuse my rudeness, well-intentioned though it was, friend. You have taught me a lesson which I shall not readily forget," and he rose to go.

Natty accompanied him to the door, neither proffering apology nor seeming to think one needed. He listened with a sullen gloom on his swarth features as Dalton described the situation of Herbert, and his own future intentions with regard to all who had aided in his discovery, and would scarcely promise to come along in the evening to assist Dalton in some business in which his presence, the other said, was absolutely necessary.

Strange to say, Dalton turned his steps from the smith's humble dwelling with a more hearty sympathy for its bold and untutored possessor than he had almost ever experienced for any one in the whole course of his stirring and eventful career. Natty's rude manner struck a chord which had long lain dormant in his soul; he had at last talked face to face with a man in the lowest walks of life whose poverty neither made him reckless nor fawning, and who bore himself towards his fellow-men with the same dignity and stern self-respect as if he had been placed by fortune in the proudest possible position.

With Herbert, in the meanwhile, life and death battled for victory. Young, ingenuous, and rich, he had been the sport of a malicious fortune, who now, fairly baffled in all else, still seemed to hold suspended over his young head the direst of all—before whom king and kaiser, beggar and serf, must bow—the grim destroyer, death.

All day long the good old doctor and Cecil watched and prayed beside his unconscious pillow; all day long the fever held him in its strong embrace. At one time he would be in a lethargy, to all appearance at the point of death; immediately after, he would start up in bed, shrieking out in his terror for Cecil or his dear papa, to rescue him from Jasper Vernon and the villain Rudd; and then he would repeat, in a tone that made your blood run cold, the frightful story of his sufferings from the day he left his guardian's house, dwelling more par-

cularly on his journey down to Dover, and which seemed, perhaps, from its more utter misery, to have taken the strongest hold upon his young mind; whilst the good old doctor failed not to remark that the boy's residence with himself seemed entirely blotted out of his memory.

At Dalton's entreaty Cecil consented to resign his place to him at Herbert's side that night, and the two friends accordingly took their places together, towards midnight, to watch by the bed of suffering—perchance of death.

Everything around them conspired to increase the sombre feelings that weighed equally upon their spirits. The house was old and lonely, and the room they occupied was but indifferently furnished, as you may well conceive. The night was stormy, for a cold chill blast moaned and sighed through the dismal woods that surrounded it on all sides. The solitary light, that burned lugubriously upon the drawers, shed a lurid light upon the boy, who was in one of his quiet humours now, and the two pale, hushed men, who watched beside him; the rest of the room lay in unbroken gloom.

Dalton sighed and shivered as he glanced from Herbert to his grey-headed friend, and then caught the rough of the wind without. Then he fell into a strange train of thought: this scene, so dark, so dreary, so disheartening, recalled his own early manhood; for he had not been happy when young. Few men of a generous and aspiring nature perhaps are, at the epoch of which we write—that strange, unreal age between eighteen and twenty-five, when a wild indefinable yearning for something above and beyond us seizes upon the mind; something intangible and mystical which our dreams paint with the rainbow tints of youth, and which, alas! soon fades and disappears beneath the ruthless hand of time.

Insensibly he began to give his thoughts utterance, in a low, subdued tone, his head sunk upon his breast, and with a troubled light gleaming in his mournful eyes.

“How terrible is this warfare between right and might—this grinding of the weak by the strong. It makes me tremble and shrink within myself as I think of all this boy has suffered; of all I suffered myself in my youth.”

“Did you suffer likewise in your youth?” said the calm, sweet voice of the watcher beside him.

“I did! I endured the keenest agony.” He sighed and closed his eyes, as if the mental survey was too much for him. Suddenly he opened them again, and fixed his humid glances upon the boy. Herbert was lying in that position which betokens the most perfect prostration of physical strength; when the arms thrown wide apart, the head sinks on the breast without

finding relief. The boy's face was perfectly devoid of all expression, as if nature was now thoroughly exhausted; his complexion was perfectly colorless, with the exception of two deep purple circles beneath the eyes, which gave a still more ghastly look to the open eyes.

"Do you still cling to the idea of his living?" said Dalton, pointing with his finger to the poor little fellow. "Look at him; his strength is worn out; he cannot contend longer with his foe."

"He has reached the turning point of his disorder," said the doctor, in a low voice, as he arose and laid his hand gently upon the face, the breast, and the limbs of his patient; "he is quite cool—he may recover."

Dalton sat looking at him for several minutes in silence. The doctor's grey hairs and placid air perhaps encouraged him to unbosom himself to him as he did.

"Are you a good listener?" he asked quietly.

"I was once," was the calm reply.

"Are you in a mood to hear a strange tale; strange only that it is true; for stranger we can not well imagine to have happened."

"If you have patience to narrate it; I prefer listening to talking, at times."

"A rare gift, my friend—listen."

"Thirty years ago, in a neighbouring county, there lived a man of great wealth, who had an only son. The father was a man of strange compounds; for he was at once a miser and a spendthrift; one who lavished untold gold upon his own pleasures, and who yet grudged that that wealth should be shared, in any degree, by those around him.—Does the story interest you?"

"Very much—go on."

Dalton shifted his position, so that his features were thrown into deep shadow, and resumed:—"This man was cursed with an unbridled lust which nothing could satisfy; and being rich and powerful, many a poor creature owed to him her early shame, and untimely death. Amongst the rest the wife of one of his keepers attracted his admiration, and with the bold, never-sleeping ingenuity which marked his character, he resolved, at all hazards, that she should be his. I should have told you he was a widower, and that his son had arrived at manhood. The keeper was known only as an honest, uncultured fellow, of great personal strength, whom his master had made a sort of favorite of, and it was when taking shelter in his company, in the latter's cottage, that he first beheld the fatal object of his passion. The woman, I have been told, was very

beautiful; of that commanding beauty which we are accustomed to realize as belonging to the haughty Egyptian, who wooed Antony to destruction; and in her case, ambition and pride were the real serpents that lurked under such a kindred form. He planned a meeting, to which she was faithful, and although she affected to treat his protestations of love with scorn, he still dared to dream of conquest, and in the end, succeeded. She had had one son, whom you saw to-day; another, the offspring of her guilty love, lies stark and stiff in the room below. The husband, who had deep passions under his heavy exterior, and who loved his worthless wife with an ardour few possess, was roused to phrenzy by his wrongs. But I anticipate; I have already mentioned, I believe, that this rich man had a son. The latter had, when on an excursion in the north of England, met with an accident, sufficiently serious to warrant his being carried to the house of a lady in the vicinity. Here he was nursed by one of the gentlest and purest beings that God ever made. His recovery was slow and tedious, and by the time he was again able to crawl about, gratitude in his breast had ripened into love."

"The young girl was too innocent and guileless to dream of the danger she ran in thus accompanying him in his walks, a being so gifted with the graces of a good person, and an ardent temperament. Poor thing! she never thought that those pleasant walks at noon, that delicious intercourse of two kindred hearts beneath the silent night, when the moon and the stars were the only witnesses to his vows of undying love, could have aught of peril or pain to her after life. She thought only of the present with its dreams of ecstatic happiness, and in that dream she was content.

"The lovers, however, for he too loved, ardently, devotedly, truly, were at length aroused from their dream of joy by a peremptory mandate from his father to return home. He knew how imperious was that will before which even his proud spirit bent, and so with many a tear and many a vow they parted, he promising with his last word to write very often, and to see her again ere long.

"He had not been at home many weeks before a letter, full of grief and terror, reached him. Her mother, who had sheltered her, like some fair tree the tender sapling beneath it, from infancy, was dead, and with her, had died the modest income that had sufficed for both."

Dalton paused and moved uneasily in his seat. He sighed more than once very heavily, and went on,—“What do you think a man, such as I describe, would do under such circumstances?”

"He would marry her," said the old doctor, in a husky voice.

His auditor's eye lighted up for a moment,—“He did! He travelled night and day from his father's place, until he reached the now sad and lonely house in which all that he now held dear on earth, dwelt in mournful foreboding and anticipations of the future. He pleaded his suit with all the eloquence of love, painted the lonely sadness of her situation with a lover's pathos, and had the satisfaction of ere long pressing to his heart, as his own, the purest and tenderest being that ever breathed.”

And now came the real difficulties of the young pair's position. His father, he knew would never permit him to carry his young bride home to the house, which by right was her's, neither would he have tainted her unsullied honour by allowing her to associate with the bold bad woman, who now usurped the rights of a lawful mistress there. The father had installed the keeper's wife at the head of his establishment, soon after she had given birth to a second son.

“And her unhappy husband?”

“Had disappeared, none knew whither. The allowance his father made him was barely sufficient for his own modest wants, and had it not been for the noble generosity of a friend, who loved him as a brother, his wife's necessities might have made an outbreak between him and his worthy parent, unavoidable. Time wore on, not without its pains, and sorrows, and its joys. The young wife's confinement drew near, and his friend with a rare and delicate generosity placed his own house at their disposal, removing all his servants, with the exception of two, whom he could trust, lest they should carry the news to his friend's father.

“The lady gave birth to a son, who was tacitly adopted by his friend, and when soon after he, in turn, brought a fair young bride to preside over his hospitable board, she too, with a woman's rare generosity, felt her heart yearn towards the poor little fellow, and never made any distinction between him and her own children, dying, in fact, without divulging the secret.

“The second year since the keeper's disappearance had drawn to a close, when one winter's morning the watchers on going their rounds came upon their lord, lying all stiff and gory in a pool of his own blood at some distance from the house. You can imagine what a wild shrill of horror such a crime sent all through the country, and how close and eager was the inquiry that followed as to the guilty hand that had struck the death blow. For two days, the keenest officers engaged in the inquiry were at fault, when a milk-maid chancing to pass the deserted

cottage of the keeper, happened to peep in, and there beheld sitting upon the deserted hearth, its former possessor. An hour after, when a strong posse of constables armed with bludgeons came to arrest him, they found him in the same position in which she had discovered him, with his hands supporting his head, brooding apparently over his unhappy life. He made no resistance, nay, he rose up and welcomed them with a smile, telling them that life was a burden too heavy for him to bear, and that he trusted he would find rest in the grave. He met his inglorious fate with the same unshaken courage, whilst his guilty wife deprived of her support by the death of her paramour, went into a distant country, and has been now long forgotten in the district where her guilt was once held in such strong detestation.

"And this is the woman whose son now lies below?" asked the old doctor, breaking the long pause that ensued.

Dalton nodded.

"I have now told you all," he said mournfully; "need I add who was the son of that guilty man?"

"Yourself, of course—and am I to understand that the young man who now bears the name of Cecil Clarendon, is not the son of Colonel Clarendon, but of yourself?"

"You may—he is my son," said the proud father—"The secret has been a bitter and painful one to me in many respects, but there is now no farther necessity for concealment. Tomorrow, if the state of poor Herbert permits it, I will break the news to Cecil, and formally acknowledge him as my heir; as Cecil Dalton, he will not be a poorer man than as Cecil Clarendon."

"And will Herbert be rich?"

"He will if he lives—I really believe he is asleep."

The doctor crossed over and examined his little patient. Herbert had fallen into a quiet slumber, his thin wasted arm pillowing his flushed cheek. There was something in the placid repose of the attitude, even the smile that at that moment hovered around his lips, that gave his fond old friend courage to hope, and he once more returned to his seat to communicate his prognostications of a happy termination to his stern, yet warm-hearted companion.

And all through the lonely night watches, those two solemn hearted watchers sate silent and sleepless beside the humble pallet where youth and death wrestled for the mastery. Who shall attempt to say how many prayers went up to the eternal throne of God for mercy! In the solemn hush of night when all the world keeps silence, the spirit insensibly "mounts her zenith with the stars," and holds communion with the loftier

intelligence that gave it being, and thus it was with Dalton and his grey-haired friend. Their minds were not cast in the mould which sees nought but gloom in a sick-bed; they knew that seasons such as these, were sent to purge away the guilt of our fallen nature, and that in the words of the psalmist, "It is better to go into the house of mourning, than to the house of feasting."

CHAPTER XLIX.

It was broad noon when Herbert awoke. The sunlight was dancing through the tattered curtain, and the first glance showed him the well-known form of the good old doctor sitting reading at a little distance.

He attempted to speak, but his words died away in an articulate whisper. He had no better fortune when he essayed to rise. He was so weak, that he could not even raise himself in bed, and tears in spite of himself sprang to his eyes.

"You have been very ill, my dear lad," said the doctor in a whisper, coming towards him; "nay, even yet you are not out of danger, and therefore I must insist upon your not attempting to speak. You are in good hands, now, although your bed is of the humblest, as you may see. Can you take anything?"

Herbert made a sign that he was thirsty, and the dear old man himself instantly brought a glass of jelly that felt deliciously cool to the poor boy's burning throat. The looks of affection he gave the doctor whilst he was eating it, and the manner in which he pressed the withered old hand he held in his own, almost made the tender hearted old man shed tears himself.

"Now you must try to go to sleep again," said the doctor in his quiet way, as he settled the clothes about him again; and Herbert smiled, as if he was quite eager to obey him. The doctor took his book and began to read again, and had got through two chapters, when chancing to look up again, he happened to look towards the bed, and discovered Herbert busily engaged in watching him with his great hollow eyes. Doctor Rivers frowned and looked seriously angry, and the boy then closed his eyes and attempted to fall asleep; his bewilderment, however, was so great to find himself fairly established under the good old doctor's protection, that he could not do so for a very long time, and long before this the doctor had resumed his book and was fairly launched into his author once more.

Then the boy was dimly conscious of some familiar face, for it was only through the fringed eyelids that he caught a glimpse of it, stealing in and hanging over him, and then he fell asleep with the warm breath fanning his cheek and dreamed gaily of Cecil.

When he awoke, Meg was bustling noiselessly about the room; but no sooner did he call out her name, in a feeble voice, than the warm-hearted little body trotted up to the bed in spite of Doctor River's threats, and would not be pacified until she had given him a good smacking kiss.

"Shall I not sponge his face with vinegar, please, sir?" she asked, dropping her eternal curtsy; "and may I not bring dear Nan in to see him? Oh dear! how wasted he is; but never mind, dearie, we will soon be strong and hearty again."

"You may sponge his face, Mrs Gyde," said the doctor, smiling at her impetuosity, "but as to bringing Nan in, I totally forbid it."

"But only for one minute, sir," pleaded Meg.

"Not for one moment; did you not promise me you would observe my directions in every thing?" cried the doctor, sternly.

Meg dropped her curtsy again, and yielded at once. The vinegar revived Herbert wonderfully, and then he had another jelly, Meg insisting upon feeding him, as his own hand shook so that he could not carry the food to his mouth.

The doctor all this while was standing with his hands clasped behind him, surveying the pair very thoughtfully. He now came forward and said—

"You must go home now, Meg, and tell Nan that her old play-fellow is, I trust, recovering."

Meg smiled, and kissed Herbert, dropped her curtsy to the doctor, and bustled out of the room. The doctor then made his preparations for the night, wheeling up a great easy chair to the fire, along side of a little round table covered with green baize on which the lamp, shaded so as to conceal its light from Herbert, was placed. When all this was completed, the room looked quite snug, and then the doctor having settled down to his book, Herbert could indulge in his thick coming fancies without restraint.

He was too feeble to think much yet, for sickness impairs the mind even still more effectually than the body; but he could feel grateful and happy, and these were such new sensations to him that they almost transported him into Elysium. The room soon began to grow dim before his gaze; gradually, the figure of the good old doctor swelled and increased until he grew to a gigantic size, whilst the book he held seemed to dilate until it filled the room of itself, and then Herbert fell asleep.

He had been nearly a week confined to bed, according to his own calculations, and had grown quite strong and cheerful, when one morning he was awoke by a more than usual commotion in his room, as if some very important personage indeed had arrived. Doctor Rivers had so religiously kept the sick-room closed from every one but Meg, that Herbert's curiosity was more than usually excited, when what was his delight to recognise in the graceful, beautiful, though somewhat pale, young lady that came up to his bed-side, poor, dear Eleanor Clarendon.

"Nell! Nell!" he cried, flinging his arms in a transport round her neck, "are you really restored to me? Kiss me! Kiss me!" and he sank down in a swoon on her neck.

When he came to himself again, it was Eleanor's breast on which his head was pillowed. It was Eleanor's hand that held the draught, that sent fresh life into his languid limbs; and it was Eleanor's voice that thrilled his ears with its well remembered tones of affectionate love.

"Kiss me, Nell, again!" he asked with a happy smile, and then holding her from him, he surveyed her at arm's length: his quick eye detecting in a moment, the womanly grace and beauty that had displaced her former slightness of figure.

"And you are still in deep mourning, Nell," he said, the next moment, with his old sweet smile—

"Lady Susan Clarendon is dead. I also heard, as I came here, that Mr. Vernon cannot recover the dangerous accident he has met with;" she said, in the calm, sweet voice the sick boy loved to hear so well. "Oh! my dear, dear Herbert, what misery we have all suffered on your account."

"Don't talk of that now, dear Nell," was the quick response. "I am afraid I have behaved very wickedly, and have only been rightly punished; but I cannot let you out of my sight for a moment," he cried, the next moment eagerly, as she made a movement with the intention of taking off her bonnet—"Can you find a chair anywhere?" he said, laughing gaily as he glanced round the scantily furnished room. "Oh! there is the doctor's, wheel that and sit down, that I may look at you—that's a good Nell!"

Eleanor did as she was bid with a ready grace, and the boy leaning on one elbow, looked at her for several minutes without speaking, his really intelligent features working with a convulsive movement, whilst a tear or two stole down his pale, thin cheeks.

"How beautiful you are, Nell!" he said, at length, "so fair, so gentle, so lady-like, and with just that blush-rose tint on your cheeks, that I love so well."

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"How beautiful you are, Nell!" he said, at length, "so fair, so gentle, so lady-like, and with just that blush-rose tint on your cheeks, that I love so well."

"You have certainly learned to flatter since we lost sight of you," said Eleanor, smiling.

The boy sate up in bed, and began to smooth down the gossy black hair that fell with such profusion over Eleanor's neck. Then he threw himself down amongst his pillows, and shading his eyes with his hands, surveyed her again with a wistful eagerness, that would have puzzled his sister had she happened to see it.

"Are you going to be married, Nell?" he asked, at last, very abruptly.

"Me! my dear Herbert; what put such a notion into your head?" she said, looking very uneasy; "really I have been so unhappy about you, that I had never any time for such things."

The boy shaded his eyes, and looked at her again with the same strange look. Eleanor's eyes had sought the ground, and her face was of a marble paleness, although the moment before it had worn the delicate blush Herbert liked so well to see. She trembled visibly before him, as he laughed gaily, and repeated the question.

Eleanor again shook her head, and looked steadily at him.

"Give me your hand into mine," said Herbert, at length. "I cannot bear to part with you, Nell."

"I hope we shall never part again," said Eleanor, mournfully. —"Do you know, Herbert, the strange discovery that has been made regarding Cecil?"

"Oh, I have been so mewed up in this abominable den, that I have never heard a word of what is passing in the world without—But what has happened?"

"Mr. Dalton, it seems, declares Cecil is his own son," said Eleanor, with an effort.

"How false! how preposterous! and does he expect we will believe him?"

"Cecil believes it," said Eleanor, firmly.

Herbert rose up in bed and let the hand fall he held in his own. He did not speak for several minutes—he was in fact bewildered with the idea Eleanor had presented to his mind. Cecil not his brother! Cecil not a Clarendon! the idea was madness to entertain for a moment. To be a Dalton instead of a Clarendon was to desert the pedigree of Llewellyn and adopt that of Jones or Smith in its stead.

"And you believe it too, Nell?" he said at last, looking up with his keen searching look.

"I do—I have had such undeniable proofs given me this morning of Cecil's connexion with Mr. Dalton, that I cannot refuse to believe that gentleman's assertion. I have seen Papa's own statement."

"And does he say that Cecil is not a Clarendon?" asked the boy eagerly.

"His will does, and in it he leaves Mr. Cecil Dalton ten thousand pounds as a token of his affection," said the girl, quietly, "and the estates to you."

"To me—Delaval?"

"Delaval, certainly——"

"And may I do what I like with it all when I become a man?"

"Certainly—If Mr. Vernon dies, our good friend, Cecil's father, will become your sole guardian."

Herbert wiped the cold sweat from his brow, and went on with a flushed countenance and thickened voice. "Then, Nell, my first deed shall be to make you rich—Kiss me, Nell, again."

Eleanor humoured his fancy, and said with a smile, "I shall be very rich with my own fortune, and what Lady Susan has left me; I have much more than I can ever need."

"Then, if you won't have it, I know what I will do with it; I will make Natty and Meg comfortable for life: Nan shall have a handsome portion, and I will look her out a good husband when she needs one, and——"

"My dear Herbert!" exclaimed his auditor, laughing immoderately, "you surely forget you are still a very young lad on a sick bed, and that many years must elapse, and many events occur, before that time. Your own recovery amongst the rest——"

"I forget nothing," said the boy, calmly. "From this hour I feel a new life begin within me, and shall endeavour to fulfil it," and Eleanor felt the pressure of his thin hot hand as he spoke—"Who is this coming up stairs?"

"It will be Doctor Rivers, I think. It is much beyond the time he promised to return at."

Doctor Rivers it proved to be. Herbert received him with open arms, his whole countenance lighting up as it had done on his sister's approach.

"You are much better to-day, my boy," said the good old man with a delighted look. "Miss Eleanor," patting her cheek, "I shall engage you as my head nurse for the future, in all dangerous cases——"

"Then I have been in danger, sir," said Herbert, still holding a hand of each.

"You have, and Almighty God in his great mercy has delivered you from it in a most wonderful manner," was the reply; "but you are looking so well, I really think I shall let you see a little company to-day in addition to your sister's. Who would you like——?"

"I should like to see Cecil above all. Then little Nan, if she can come——"

"Who is Nan?" asked Eleanor.

"One of Herbert's sweethearts," said the doctor, slyly.

"No! no, Nell—Nan was my play-fellow for a very short time," said Herbert, stoutly.

"Nan is in fact the daughter of the good people to whom we owe the discovery of your brother," said the doctor, proffering Eleanor an explanation. "Then I shall walk down myself to Mistress Nan and convey her here."

Herbert's eyes filled with tears, but he did not speak as the excellent old man hurried away to keep his promise. "I shall petition to be allowed to get up to-morrow, I think," he said.

"You must be removed from here as speedily as possible," said his sister, glancing round the miserable room.

"Mean as it is, it is a palace compared to the dens I have slept in for some time past," was the boy's reply. "My misery has taught me a life's long lesson."

Fresh steps were now heard on the stairs, and presently Cecil entered very quietly, for he fancied Herbert must be much worse than he really was. The latter eyed him for a moment with an unconscious look, for the addition of well trimmed whiskers, a firmer carriage, and increased manliness, had quite transformed Cecil from the light handsome youth Herbert had parted with at Delaval. It was only for a moment, however; for, at the first word Cecil uttered, Herbert flung himself on his breast, with a passionate flood of tears, mingled with kisses, for Herbert was still a boy.

Cecil was really bewildered. He could not understand why Herbert's emotion was so violent as it really was, especially as he knew that Herbert was by this time aware that all relationship between them was now dissolved by the late declaration on the part of Mr. Dalton.

"My dear Herbert, for God's sake be calm!" he said, really fearing at length that Herbert would do himself an injury by giving way to such emotion; "you will kill yourself, my dear lad."

Herbert calmed himself with a mighty effort, and relinquishing his hold, fell back exhausted amongst his pillows—he turned over upon his face, and although no sound escaped him, they could see by the convulsive heaving of his frame that the storm had not yet passed over. Many minutes elapsed without either Eleanor or Cecil venturing to disturb him, and at length he looked up—

"Where are you both?" he said, looking wildly round, for his vision was obscured, so that he could not discern them at first.

"Cecil!"

"I am here, Herbert."

"Come nearer—nearer," said the boy, mournfully.

Cecil obeyed until he had approached so near that Herbert could rest his aching head upon his breast—then he took Cecil's two hands within his own, and said in a low plaintive tone that brought the tears up into his auditor's eyes—

"Cecil, God knows how dearly I loved you when I thought you were really and truly my brother! I loved you, my Cecil, as few brothers can love, and now to be told—" his voice faltered, and a painful pause ensued.

Cecil felt the little hot hand press his own convulsively. The arm that encircled Herbert's slender frame returned the kindly pressure, and this nerved Herbert to proceed.

"To be told," continued the sad, weak voice, "that you are not my brother—our brother, I should say, Cis., for Eleanor loved you as dearly as I did. Oh, it is a bitter pang!"

"My dear Herbert."

"Hush, Cecil," said the boy, as a new and peculiar expression flitted over his pale, thin face. "They tell me that by your being a Dalton instead of a Clarendon, I shall be very rich, but God knows, Cecil, my brother, that I would barter it all for the right to call you by that old familiar name. Eleanor!"

"Yes, Herbert," said Eleanor, who had crept away to the window to indulge her tears in silence.

"Come here."

Eleanor came forward. Herbert was still lying with his head pillowed on Cecil's breast. As soon as he caught sight however, of her pale, tearful face, he changed his posture, and flinging one arm round her neck, still retained Cecil's grasp with the other hand.

"You will still love Cecil, Nell, dear?" he asked gently.

"I will try, Herbert."

"And you, Cecil?"

What Cecil's answer was time must show, for at that moment the door very provokingly opened, and Doctor Rivers appeared, leading in his hand the unfairy like form of Mistress Nan, who now looked bashfully pretty in the company of such grand people.

"Leave the two together for a little time," whispered the doctor, who had already noticed how flushed and excited Herbert had become, "she will soon bring him round to his usual quietness again;" and obeying his commands, Eleanor, and Cecil Dalton stole out of the room.

"Come here, Nan, and sit beside me," said Herbert, languidly, after a long pause, during which, Nan had been standing in the

very inelegant act of sucking her thumb. "I am ill, my dear, and very weak, so that I cannot talk much, but you can talk away as much as you please."

And thus adjured, the little round robin took the seat at Herbert's head, and began to stare at his thin, wasted face with all the wonder that two large dreamy eyes could infuse into themselves.

TO THE MEMORY OF MY MOTHER.

BY MRS. ABDY.

My mother, is the last sad struggle o'er?
 Has thy kind heart already ceased its beating?
 Must I behold thy loving eyes no more,
 Nor listen to thy glad and cordial greeting?
 How shall I miss thy counsel and thy care,
 How vainly shall I seek to find another
 My pleasures to partake—my pains to share
 With sympathy so true as thine, my Mother!

Thine were the powers of prompt, decisive thought,
 The gift of keen and searching penetration;
 The memory, with exhaustless treasures fraught,
 The ready flow of varied conversation:
 Time oft the soaring intellect can bind,
 And oft the soul's warm impulses can smother,
 But had not dimmed the brightness of thy mind,
 Nor chilled the kindness of thy heart, my Mother!

Thou, to such anxious apprehension prone,
 When on the welfare of a loved one thinking,
 Why wert thou heedless of thyself alone?
 Why so unmindful that thy health was sinking?
 The failing strength—the dim and languid eye,
 Were signs thou had'st not slighted in another;
 Thy watchful care all perils could descry,
 And note all changes but thine own—my Mother!

Mother, if spirits in a land divine,
May view their earthly objects of affection,
Then shalt thou know how truly I and mine
Hold thee in fond and faithful recollection ;
How oft we dwell on each familiar scene,
How oft retrace thy virtues to each other,
And feel that mortal love hath never been
More pure and perfect than *thy* love, my Mother.

LITTLE MARY BROWN.

CHAPTER I.—THE DILEMMA.

LITTLE Mary Brown was in despair. Eight o'clock came, nine o'clock struck, and still no important looking parcel arrived, addressed to "Miss Brown, Holly Cottage, Dovedale," and containing the sweetest pale pink *crêpe* imaginable, along with other indispensables for the forthcoming ball. On the morrow it would be too late, for little Mary and her handmaid could scarcely be expected to have the dress completed in the proper style by nine o'clock in the evening, which was the fashionable hour of meeting for saltatory purposes in that rustic village. So Mary leaned her rounded elbow upon the rose-wood work-table, and fell into deep thought. She had a white muslin dress with flounces, but she thought it too plain. Also a blue tarlatane, but that was out of the question, as she had already been seen in it twice. She had the trimmest and tastiest of black satin dresses, but that was not to be thought of for a ball, even with her valuable pearl necklace, presented to her on her seventeenth birthday by her kind, rich, old Aunt Sykes, who had a fixed opinion that there was not such another dear little pet as her pretty Polly anywhere. And, truly, Mary merited this opinion, for if lips like a divided cherry, the richest, meltingest blue eyes, the glossiest brown silken hair, the plumpest little figure, the tiniest foot and sweetest smile in the world, did not constitute her the dearest little girl upon it,—why, her acquaintances were more difficult to please than we are, and we wish we had been one of them, that is all. But

this is a long digression, and does not help Mary out of her difficulty. She cogitated two full hours, by her little gold watch, and wearied herself to no purpose, and at length was fain to lay her graceful head upon her pillow, and trust to her dreams for a hint.

CHAPTER II.—THE ARRIVAL.

MORNING came, clear and balmy, and little Mary jumped cheerily out of bed, and addressed herself to her toilet. She bathed her pretty face in the fresh water, until it looked as blooming as the roses that flourished under her window; and it was only when she was combing, and brushing, and parting her silken hair with her plump little fingers, that the remembrance of her unsolved difficulty occurred to her. It served for a subject of meditation while she slowly arranged her delicate lilac muslin dress, with its snow white collar and ribbons of the palest green. The sound of her father's voice vociferating her name, awakened her at length to the recollection that breakfast must have been ready for a long time, and she knew that her doting parent could never thoroughly enjoy his matutinal meal, without his dear little daughter sitting by his side, with her happy face and musical voice. So she ran down stairs, and was in her father's arms, before she perceived a tall, dark young man, of elegant appearance, standing by the window.

"Mary," said Mr. Brown, "this is your cousin from India, whose name at any rate you have not forgotten."

The young man advanced and paid his respects, in a pleasant, smiling manner, that soon set the blushing girl at her ease.

"Come, Mary," cried her father, "how long am I to be kept waiting for my breakfast? though I invited Charles to come here direct, I never bargained for him to monopolise your attention in this manner. But he shall pay the penalty for his fault after breakfast, for I intend to leave him in your hands, while I take a long ride, until dinner-time."

"A more pleasing penalty you could not inflict, my dear uncle," cried the young man, who appeared much more engrossed by his little cousin, than by the hospitable breakfast spread before him, to which, notwithstanding, he contrived to do ample justice in a quiet way.

Charles Davidson had been sent out to India as a cadet, several years before, and had now returned a lieutenant on his

first leave of absence. His pleasure at finding so beautiful a girl in the place of the scarce opened rose-bud he had left behind, was extreme. Having come over with a half-formed intention of taking back with him a wife to cheer his lonely condition, it was dangerous to meet with so pretty a cousin on the very threshold of his native land. Charles was fully aware of his peril, yet he did not shrink from it, but braved it manfully, as a hero should.

CHAPTER III. — THE ARBOUR.

AND now the breakfast is over, and Mr. Brown is off on his stout grey cob, for he happens to be one of those "heavy, timid gentlemen," whose requirements are so kindly attended to in the "Times." Little Mary is left alone with her slightly formidable visitor. They talk—they look over the books that are plentifully strewed around: at last they walk out into the garden. And a pretty garden it was, with its box-hedges, and its quaintly-trimmed borders. It was none of your modern gardens, with their new-fangled plants, and flowers of unpronounceable names. No! Mr. Brown's garden loved sweet briar and London-pride, and eschewed not southern-wood, sweet peas, and marygolds. There were within its pleasant boundaries old stumps of trees, "with quaint devices carved," "pleached alleys," ending in mysterious bowers, and beds of velvet camomile, which, trample them as you might, but throve the more for the pressure. Charles and Mary turned into one of the shadiest of the heath-covered arbours, and then fell into more connected conversation.

"The place is vastly improved since I left," said the young gentleman, extending himself lazily upon the mossy seat. "I suppose you have had a hand in disposing of the old trees which used to hide from view the charming peep yonder?"

"Why, as to a hand in it, I cannot say," replied Mary, laughing, and glancing down on her delicate little fingers, "but I may take the credit of having, by my persuasions, induced Papa to enlarge our prospect in that direction."

"I remember a delightful old bridge, just on the other side, below the hill yonder. Is it in a state of preservation?"

"Oh yes! that neither Papa nor I would allow to be touched on any account. When preparations for the railway-cutting

commenced, I was quite afraid lest it should interfere with our favourite bridge, but, happily it did not come within half-a-mile of the spot."

"Shall we take a walk to this self-same bridge?" asked Charles.

"Oh! certainly; I was just going to propose it."

"It will not be the first time that I have strolled about here with my dear little cousin," continued Charles, gazing on the bonny, blushing face of his companion with undisguised admiration, "but I fear the memory of those days has no place in her heart."

"I don't know,—I have walked with so many aunts and cousins, I cannot remember all——."

"Aunts and cousins! You don't confound *me* with the aunts and cousins, I hope." And the young lieutenant looked somewhat piqued, that he should be classed *en masse* with Mary's more uninteresting relations.

"Well," said she, evasively, "the sun is getting high; shall we go before it becomes too warm?"

"Yes, let us go; we will see what familiar scenes will do towards recalling to your recollection poor, forgotten me."

The blush which had played on Mary's cheek during this conversation, seemed to say that those days were not so unremembered as Charles supposed, and had he been an observant youth, this would not have failed to strike him. But, as it was, it passed unnoticed, and she, gaily waving her hand, tripped into the house to prepare for the expedition, leaving the gallant young officer more pensive than was his wont.

CHAPTER IV.—THE BRIDGE.

LITTLE Mary ran lightly up stairs, with the smile still lingering on her lip, and the blush upon her cheek; indeed, the latter had not quite disappeared when she issued forth again, attired in a tiny white muslin bonnet, wreathed with wild roses, and a light summer shawl. Charles was standing under the trelliced porch, and his glance of admiration was not lost upon the pretty girl, who, however, affected not to observe it, and led the way down the paved walk to the little green gate that opened on to the high road. After walking for some time, they came to a stile dividing them from a corn-field.

Fair reader, if you live in the country, you have seen such a stile as that of which I speak—a cross-barred, cross-grained, uneven sort of stile, up one side of which when you have climbed, you are fain to stand tottering on the top, until some manly arm assist you down; and even with this help you do not accomplish the descent without a perilous jump, that, were you old, ugly, and stout, would probably overbalance both your gentleman and his temper. But of course you, dear reader, are none of these, and will have a favourable recollection of this description of stile, whose only real fault in your eyes was, that it wickedly attempted too liberal a display of your slender ankles. And here, our male reader, we offer to lay a wager to any amount that these stiles—alas! fast disappearing, with other good old relics of the good old times—have prompted more weddings than any matchmaking mother, aunt, or other scheming old lady in the kingdom. For, do they not appeal to your best feelings as a man? And can you do otherwise than lay your heart at the feet of the gentle being who climbs so timidly, and stands so deprecatingly on the summit, entirely depending on the firm grasp of your hand? Then the prophetic flutter and roseate flush with which she resigns herself into your half embrace, as you extend your arm to lift her to the ground. My good sir, you must be a breathing mummy, or have a heart of stone, if you can resist these moving appeals to your sensibility. I know I for one never could; and, to tell you a little secret that I would not confide to every one,—*my wife caught me in this manner.*

But, to return to our sweet heroine and her gallant attendant. After crossing the stile, in doing which *she* experienced all the vicissitudes, and *he* all the sensations, enumerated above, they soon attained the brow of the hill, where one of the prettiest prospects in England opened upon them. A fair valley lay stretched at their feet, in all the loveliness of early summer. Environed on every side by wooded hills, it seemed a paradise where nought but peace could reign, and the herds of cattle that studded the landscape added to the quiet beauty of the scene. White cottages nestled in the greenest nooks, and amidst all murmured the “silver-tongued brook,” the delicate trellising of whose rustic bridge was just distinguishable through the mass of foliage that overshadowed its banks. Charles and his fair companion were light and agile, and a few bounds down the slippery sward brought them to the foot of the hill, and as many seconds to the bridge itself, where the tall old trees protected them from the ardent sunbeams, and a fallen trunk afforded them a pleasant resting-place. Expressions of admiration fell from Charles’s lips, as his eye wandered over the

charming prospect. It was the same dear old spot as ever, improved by the mellowing hand of time. Mary had fallen into a reverie; but Charles, being in no mood for one himself, could not allow her to indulge hers to any extent, and at length, by his unwearied questioning, effectually roused her. He was anxious to know how she spent her days in this peaceful corner of the world. Had they many friends within walking distance? Surely, in that pretty ivied cottage yonder there were some acquaintance meet for little Mary.

"Oh yes! you have just singled out the very house at which I most like to visit. They—the Stewarts—are really the life of the village. I know not what we should do without them."

"What style of gaiety, then, do you patronise, my pretty cousin? anything more exciting than a dance round the may-pole, once a year?"

"Now, Charles, do not suppose us so rustic as all that, I beseech you. By the bye, I can give you an excellent proof to the contrary, by showing you how very well conducted our balls are down here."

"Balls! you don't mean to say you give balls, do you? Excellent! if I could only be here!"

"And why not? To-night the Stewarts, at Ivy Cottage there, give a dance in honour of Walter's coming of age; and you, being our visitor, can of course accompany Papa."

"Escort me, would have sounded better, would it not, little prude?"

"Ah! I don't think I shall go," said Mary, mournfully.

"Monstrous! not go to the ball! There are not so many here, I should fancy, that you can so easily afford to miss one. Why in the world should you *not* go? Nonsense! you *must* go."

"Nay, nay, Charles, if you knew the appearance I shall present if I *do* make up my mind to go, you would no longer think of escorting me."

"Why, what will be the matter with you? I am sure you cannot look otherwise than"—

"Now, Charles, I know what you are going to say; but I hate compliments. The matter is that my dress has not arrived, and I have not one at home that I think worthy of the occasion."

Charles meditated for a moment, then caught the startled girl in his arms, and swung her round in an ecstasy. "You shall be the loveliest creature in the room! Come, come, directly! There is not a moment to lose. Upon my word, twelve o'clock already. Come! come!"

But Mary did not respond. This sudden familiarity had startled and half offended her; and what her madcap cousin

had in his head she could not imagine. He, on the other hand, was too full of his scheme to think of making any apology; so Mary wished him good-morning, saying that she must return to see after the preparations for dinner, and hastily walked off by herself, leaving the offender, somewhat annoyed, to follow as best he could.

CHAPTER V.—THE SURPRISE.

DURING her solitary walk home, Mary had ample time to remember all that had passed, and felt her temporary irritation gradually giving way to amusement. "After all," thought she, "he is a cousin, and we must allow a little for so near a relationship. I can't bear people to be so rude; yet I dare say, poor fellow, he meant no impertinence, he looked so astonished when I left him. He is certainly the handsomest creature I ever saw. Perhaps others would not think so; but there is something extremely fascinating about him: *that* no one can deny. Well, I dare say he will not be long after me; indeed, I think I see him now at the top of the hill. I shall forgive him when he comes in." Mary's soliloquy was terminated by the sound of a horse's footsteps on the smooth, macadamized road. It was her father, returning to dinner, who called out as he trotted past her, "Mary, my love, there is your cousin Elizabeth coming to dine with us. She took the short cut by the fields. I dare say you will find her"—the remainder of his speech was lost in the distance. Mary quickened her pace, and soon reached the garden gate.

"Well, Mary," exclaimed a loud, cheerful voice, "well, Mary, I am here before you, you see."

A girl came running down the paved walk, her bonnet flying back on her shoulders, and her rich massive black tresses streaming on the breeze. Elizabeth Craven was very different from Mary Brown. Some people thought her a much finer specimen of womanhood; but she was too luxuriant, too handsome, too lively by far. She was, however, very much liked by her friends, who valued her for her constant good temper and cheerfulness, and the willing hand she would extend to help any one out of a difficulty. Besides, she was ready for anything: music, or millinery; pies, or poetry; German, or gardening; dancing, or dairy-work—nothing came amiss to her, and she was always applied

to when anything of importance was on the *tapis*. She now reached our little Mary, and nearly overwhelmed her with caresses.

"Mary, dear," said she, as they walked arm in arm towards the house, "I understand that you have a visitor, a very handsome young man. Who in the world is he, love?"

Mary blushed, she did not well know why. "My cousin, Charles Davidson, from India," she replied.

"Oh, indeed! Yes, I see. Well, and is he so handsome as I heard he was?"

"Why, who gave you this flattering description of him?"

"Now, my dear, don't be troublesome, but just tell me, 'yes,' or 'no.' Surely, it is not so *very* difficult a point to decide."

"You see it is according to taste; however, I think ——"

"Come, come, I know what you think, without your telling me," interrupted Elizabeth, laughing, as Mary hesitated as to what terms of admiration she should use. "So now, only one more question, and then I will tell you my plans, proceedings, &c. Will he make an eligible partner for the ball to-night?"

"Are you going to the Stewarts'?" exclaimed Mary, joyfully, when in an instant the fact of her inability to join in the amusement checked her pleasure.

"Yes, and have ordered a boy to bring my things, that I may dress here, and give your good father the pleasure of escorting me. But, bless me! what's the matter now? Don't you want me, or are you afraid I shall keep the Adonis all to myself to-night?"

"Oh, no! Elizabeth, dear, you know you are always welcome, and I don't want any Adonis; but to tell you the truth, I have been disappointed in my dress, and now have not one to go in."

"Nonsense! surely we can furbish up something. Pray, let us go upstairs immediately, and see what can be done, for we certainly ought not to lose any time."

But here they heard the garden gate clash, and Mary said, "Wait one instant, and you will then be able to judge for yourself of my cousin's attractions, for if I mistake not, he is here."

And they saw him pass the window, but he did not come in.

"Where is the creature gone to now?" asked Elizabeth, impatiently.

"Very likely to my father in the stable; but he cannot be long," answered Mary; and she was right; for a few minutes afterwards the uncle and nephew entered the room together. We are not quite sure that the young soldier's courage had not somewhat failed him at the idea of meeting his cousin alone after his dire offence; perhaps, however, he had merely been to the stable like a kind nephew to see if he could in any way help his uncle. He looked

deprecatingly at Mary, while being introduced to Elizabeth, whom he had never seen before, and who tossed her bright head saucily at this evident division of his attention. Mary could not help smiling.

"That reminds me," exclaimed Charles; and immediately ran out of the room.

"What is the boy about?" said Mr. Brown, laughing; "he shoots about like a lamp-lighter."

They had not much time for conjecture, for our hero soon returned, carrying a large parcel, carefully packed.

"My dear uncle," said he, "I forgot to mention that I had brought some pretty things from India, which if my cousin——" He looked at her: Mary smiled again.

"Come, my boy," exclaimed her father, "why do you stand hesitating there? Mary wants to look into your parcel, or she is no daughter of Eve. Besides, it is nearly dinner hour, so you had better display your treasures at once, that we may get them cleared away in time."

Charles obeyed; and after taking off an oilskin wrapper, a covering of brown paper, and another of white, within which was still another of tissue paper, he unfolded before the admiring eyes of the two young ladies a splendid gold-embroidered India muslin. After this came three or four lighter fabrics, amongst which Mary particularly noticed a fair, filmy piece of the softest white muslin, embroidered all over by the needle.

"My dear fellow," said Mr. Brown, "I am afraid you are extravagant. Those magnificent muslins must have cost more rupees than you will like to mention."

Charles laughed; and turning to Mary, asked which of the muslins she liked best.

"Oh! this most certainly," she answered, laying her taper fingers on the delicate white embroidered muslin. Charles could have kissed those fingers, but he refrained. Mr. Brown and Elizabeth were both for the one embroidered with gold, but Mary held her opinion still.

"You are right, my dear cousin," exclaimed Charles; "that is the very one I intended for you, and thought you would choose."

"How shall I thank you?" said little Mary, blushing like a rose-leaf.

"By accompanying your papa and me in it to the ball this evening."

"Ah! if it were possible—but you know it is not."

"My dear girl," said Elizabeth; "am I not here?—and who is quicker at running up dresses than your handy maiden, Letty?"

"True, dear Elizabeth, but it is already dinner-time."

"Oh! never mind that; if Mr. Brown will excuse us, we will just get a mouthful where we can, and commence immediately."

TRANSLATION OF A SWISS SONG.

Come, haste to the mountains! Come, hasten away!
For, hark, when I hear the lads merrily play,
With tabor and pipe and the echoing horn,
It's thus that my friends have welcomed the morn.

Already the sun has appeared in the East
To cheer with his beams this our holiday feast,
And soon will he reach to those summits of snow,
To shed a glad warmth o'er the valley below.
Then haste to the mountains, etc.

See yonder the flocks, how they tranquilly feed,
While there the lone shepherd is tuning his reed;
But soon these rude crags with soft echoes will ring,
When Switzerland's maidens their roundelays sing.
So haste to the mountains, etc.

Now soaring in circles towards the blue sky,
Behold the young eaglets, how strongly they fly,
While bounding along, see the active chamois
Pursued with loud shouts by some light-footed boy.
Then haste to the mountains, etc.

E'en when the bright sun its full circuit has made,
The moon's pallid light shall illumine the glade,
And though we may venture no farther to roam,
With laughter and song we will all travel home.
So haste to the mountains, etc.

THE SECRETARY.

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE ROCK," "GUARDS, HUSSARS, AND INFANTRY," "THE BEAUTY OF THE RHINE," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XVI.

FALSTAFF.—"Lord, Lord, how is this world
Given to lying."

KING HENRY IV., PART I.

ABOUT an hour previous to the time when Frederick Garston sallied forth to keep his dinner engagement with the baronet, two gentlemen might have been observed slowly wending their way at a sauntering pace along the hot pavement, and eyeing with much interest the few remaining carriages which now and then passed before the loungers.

"Upon my word, Cooley," commenced one of the party, "I can't stand this sort of work any longer; almost every one has left town, and here am I, like

'The last rose of summer,'
all alone."

"The dickens you are?" replied the Honourable Mark; "you may deem yourself a rose, if you please,—a cabbage rose, or any sort of rose; but if you are one, what am I?—for I take it there's not much difference between us."

"Nay, nay, Cooley," replied the other, laughing, "you forget that you've spent half your life in India, and that does not tend to improve either the complexion or the constitution."

"Does it not, though?" rejoined Mr. Cooley; "the fact is, Handstop, I have known a Lascar who was the colour of a half-penny turn to as beautifully blooming a European tinted skin as that girl now crossing the street possesses, and simply by chewing beetle nut."

"He must have eaten a good quantity, I should imagine?" inquired the colonel.

* Continued from page 359, vol. lvi.

"Not much," said the oriental; "somewhere about the produce of one day's sale of stock in Covent Garden market,—not more."

"I should imagine not," cried the colonel, drily; "but it's getting late, Cooley, so, where shall we dine?"

"Egad, I don't mind," replied his companion, "it's all the same to me, provided I can get my hookah afterwards."

"Well, then," responded the gallant officer, "suppose we say 'The Travellers?'"

"Don't belong to 'The Travellers,'" observed the oriental.

"What!" answered Handstop in astonishment, "a man who has wandered so far and seen so much as you have, not belong to 'The Travellers?'"

"Why, between you and me, colonel," replied the other, "they do tell such marvellous stories at 'The Travellers,' that bless me if I can stand it."

"Oh, that's what frightened you, is it?" laughingly inquired the other.

"Exactly," said Mr. Cooley, nodding his head significantly; "but still there are other places besides 'The Travellers,' so once for all where shall we go?"

"All the same to me," replied the colonel: "of course you don't belong to the 'United Service,' so we can't go there. There's not a soul at 'White's.' I hate dining at home, and detest hotels. But here comes that bore of bores, Major Storkley; and, as he pries into everything that does not concern him, I have little doubt but he will be able to tell us to a nicety where we can get the best dinner with the least trouble, and shortest distance to travel."

"How are you, Storkley?" exclaimed Colonel Handstop, on meeting the walking catalogue of gone-by recollections. "My friend Cooley and I were just mentioning your name."

"Bless me," replied the major, "why who would have thought it possible to find both of you in town at this season? Why, I remember when I was a boy, it was considered quite a crime to be in London after July."

"Nevertheless, here we are," answered the oriental; "and, whether in town or out of town, we must be fed; and therefore, as you know everything, we require your decision as to where we shall order dinner."

"Certainly, my dear sir," he replied; "any information I possess is always at the service of my friends.—Where's the best place to dine, eh? There are so many, it is not easy to choose: why, I remember when I was a boy, there were about two streets with clubs in them, and now there are two clubs in every street—ah! ah!"

"And I likewise remember some very strange things when I was a boy, and since, Major Storkley," remarked Mr. Cooley; to which assertion the gallant officer fully assented, partly from custom, at being constantly stopped short in his harangues, and likewise from a recollection of the anecdotes which were detailed by the oriental at Mr. Vernon's.

Much discussion now arose as to the place of their destination for the purpose already mentioned, and the two friends greatly repented having called in the major for the benefit of his opinion, as that worthy gentleman instantly declared his readiness to accompany them on a similar errand to their own.

"The Travellers" was out of the question, as Mr. Cooley had not enrolled himself a member, and the "Oriental" was similarly debarred, for the like reason, against Colonel Handstop; and as the major belonged to neither one nor the other, it was at length determined that "Long's" should have the honour of providing for their temporary wants.

"I have not been in 'Long's' for many a day," remarked Mr. Cooley: "I trust we shan't be poked into a small, close room, which is generally the case at those places."

"I can't stand it if we are," observed the colonel: "close rooms always make me ill."

"So they do me," chimed in the major.—"I recollect when I was a boy——"

"True," interrupted Mr. Cooley, "you recollect the same person I was just going to mention, I have no doubt."

"No, I don't, Mr. Cooley," replied the other, partially offended: "I don't know whom you were going to mention."

"That's odd, by the great mogul," replied the oriental: "beg pardon, thought you did."

"But who was he, Cooley?" asked Handstop.

"Oh, a friend of mine," was the answer—"an Indian friend—met him frequently in Bombay—clever fellow—subject to fits—couldn't stand hot rooms—always ill—down he went, regularly done for. Well, you see, he did not like this—always afraid the doctors would get at him when he was insensible, so he hit on a crafty device. Doctors terrible fond of whipping out their lancet, and then whipping it into him: my friend knew this, so he had printed in large letters on his shirt sleeves,—*'Whoever bleeds me, shall be prosecuted according to law:'* and round his neck was written,—*'Stick me on my head.'*"

"Stick him on his head, Cooley!" repeated Colonel Handstop: "what was that for?"

"Fun, I suppose," remarked the major.—"When I was a little boy, I recollect standing on my head for——"

"Exactly so, my dear sir," recommenced the oriental, effec-

tually checking the major's reminiscences; "good fun, I dare say, for little boys—bad fun for my fat friend, though; however there was no help for it. Well, one day he had a fit—down he went—in rushed the doctors, for they made a point of hovering round him like vultures over a field of battle—off went his coat—out came the lancet—shirt sleeve unbuttoned—when there they saw,—'Whoever bleeds me, shall be prosecuted according to law.' None dare touch him—hate lawyers in India—worse than bandicoots—horrid thieves, those bandicoot rats—steal anything—soldiers in hospitals obliged to sleep with their hands and feet in cocoa-nut shells, for fear the bandicoots should steal their nails. Sick people in India never open their mouths during the night, for fear bandicoots steal their teeth. But to return to Punckler—doctors posed—didn't know what to do—about to resign him to his fate, when some humane man proposed taking off his neckcloth to give him air, when to their astonishment they beheld inscribed round his neck, like a master's name on a dog collar,—'Stick me on my head,' so they did; and, in a very few seconds, Punckler recovered, whereas, had they bled him, he would have died to a certainty. After that, nothing was more common in a crowded room, than to see my friend in a corner, with his legs in the air. In fact, people got so accustomed to it, that a party was never considered to have gone off well, if Punckler did not elevate his heels for half an hour, at least. Poor fellow!" concluded Mr. Cooley, with a sigh, "he met a dusty end."

"What description of death might that have been?" asked the colonel.

"I'll tell you," answered the Oriental. "One day the governor general held a grand levee. Everyone attended, poor Punckler among the rest. Gorgeous spectacle—troops out—guards of honour—bands playing, and all that sort of thing. Just as I was passing the governor, I saw a pair of shoes in the air—knew them directly, for Punckler and I employed the same maker. Being accustomed to seeing my friend in that posture, guessed in a moment how the case stood—had a fit—propped up to recover—all right—levee full—people passed—time sped—and all departed—verandas open—clouds of dust—awfully hot—servants came—covered furniture, and by mistake covered Punckler—went away—locked the rooms—took the key, and never opened them till next levee, months afterwards—swept the rooms—uncovered furniture, and uncovered Punckler—Punckler dead—died standing with his legs up—couldn't get down—no one to help him—smothered with dust and furniture covers—poor fellow!"

"Poor fellow, indeed," observed the colonel.

"Wonderful country, India," timidly chimed in the major. "I remember reading an account of the heat when I was a little boy, and——"

"Heat, my dear sir," exclaimed Mr. Cooley, as usual interrupting the loquacity of the speaker. "I can assure you, major, it would be utterly impossible for any one to form even a notion of the sun's influence in that country, unless his information was obtained by personal experience. To give you an instance of the difficulty we experience in the East to bring anything to a bearable temperature without ice, I can assure you that the tea I was accustomed to drink at breakfast on a Saturday, was invariably poured out on the Monday previous."

"What was that for?" inquired the colonel.

"To give it time to cool," replied the oriental.

Garnished with similar conversation the dinner proceeded the major offering himself up an unconscious butt for the merciless attacks of Mr. Cooley, while Colonel Handstop, not deeming it necessary to exert himself further than occasionally to bestow some mark of approbation, sat by and greatly enjoyed the scene.

"You must have seen an immensity of service, my dear major?" inquired Mr. Cooley, with a serio-comic expression of countenance, which could not have passed current for interest with any one of less obtuse faculties than was vouchsafed to the person addressed. "You must have seen a great deal in your time."

"Why, as for service," replied the gratified officer; "I believe I may safely say, I have witnessed my share—I was at *Scylla* in one thousand eight hundred and seven."

"And *Charybdis* ever since," muttered Mr. Cooley to the Colonel.

"Besides various skirmishes, as well as general actions," continued the major; "moreover, I had the honour of being present at the battle of Vittoria—passage of the Bidassoa, 'Neville, and Nieve, *cum multis aliis* : in short, I perfectly remember ——"

"True, true," interrupted Mr. Cooley—"I understand fully, yet I much doubt if you can recollect anything equal to Leswarree."

"Leswarree!" repeated he, "of the peninsula."

"Yes, Leswarree," answered the Honourable Mark Cooley; "Perhaps you never heard of my exploits at Seringapatam."

"No, indeed, I never did," replied the colonel.

"Nor I, either," chimed in the major; "though now you mention it, I do think I recollect in seventeen hundred and ninety-nine ——"

"Exactly," observed Mr. Cooley, "the very year. Well, sir,

now for the facts. There was I, an amateur, fought like a fury—led the attack—scaled the walls—cut down the *chevaux-de-frise*—rushed to the battlements through the embrasures—tore up the palisades—slew at least a dozen fellows, each as tall again as the Irish giant, and as strong as a two hundred horse-power steamer. Well, gentlemen, what should I see? neither more nor less than Tippoo himself, grinding his sabre against the skull of a pioneer of the thirty-third regiment. Common humanity could not stand it—so on I went—rushed at Tippoo, when the commanding officer of the brigade to which I had attached myself, ordered me in arrest.”

“Had they time to put people in arrest at that moment?” asked the astonished major.

“Oh, plenty! good discipline in India, I assure you,” replied the other—“now mark the sequel: fact is, the commanding officer was jealous, and fearful that my distinguished valour would ensure me a large amount of prize money, he adopted that plan of depriving me of honour, as well as of reward—didn’t answer though; for, by the great Mogul, sir, he either did not know, or could not understand that I was a civilian—so, what d’ye think I did? Why, gentlemen, I brought an action against him for false imprisonment, and I was awarded damages to exactly double the amount that my persecutor was awarded prize money. Did him there, didn’t I?”

“Indeed, you did, Cooley,” replied the Colonel; “but I hope you did not lose your share of the spoil?”

“Oh no—far from it, got nearly a lack of rupees; and write my memorandas to this day in a book made of part of Tippoo Saib’s skin.”

What further information Mr. Cooley might have given on this point, it were difficult to surmise, as at this moment their attention was unavoidably attracted by some expressions issuing from another part of the room, which until then they had not been aware was occupied.

CHAPTER XVII.

“To turn were sin,
Who nought will venture, nought can win.”

BEAUTY OF THE RHINE.

To account for the interruption of the oriental’s conversation as detailed in the preceding chapter, we must accompany Frede-

rick Garston to Sir George Elms's mansion, whither, as has already been stated, he had so unexpectedly been summoned, to aid in the enjoyment of that most momentous period of the twenty-four hours—the dinner.

Young and sanguine as our hero was, the events of the last few days had materially opened his mind to the perilous position in which he stood, and from which difficulties, moreover, he saw little or no chance of extrication, save by withdrawing himself altogether from a connexion which his secretly cherished feelings foretold to be impossible.

What termination to his engrossing passion might have been imaged to himself it were hard to conjecture; but the prospect could not have partaken of much brilliancy, since, in addition to the immeasurable distance at which birth and fortune had placed Emily Beecher from him, there was the great obstacle of the marquis's decided negative to the connexion, coupled as it naturally would be with well-merited upbraidings of ingratitude and ill-requital for the manifold benefits received. Then, again, the undeviating dislike and animosity of Lord Dropmore offered no trivial objection; and, above all, was he confident of possessing the affections of her whom he thus secretly worshipped? Might he not all along have mistaken a condescending kindness, originating in a knowledge of his inferior position, for a feeling of a more absorbing and tender nature? And was it not possible that, with the kind tact of woman, Emily Beecher had merely exerted herself to soothe the irritable state of mind which a remembrance of his obscure origin was now but too apt to awaken? And probably the very knowledge of his story, which she had heard from the marquis, was in itself amply sufficient for calling forth those generous kindnesses and numerous flattering attentions which are so frequently lavished without further meaning, on one side, whilst on the other they are received as evidences "strong as Holy Writ" of the existence of sentiments which never for an instant had been harboured.

Then, again, was it probable that a girl so lovely, so talented, and so much sought after as Emily naturally was, would throw herself away upon a being who was, in fact, little better than a homeless adventurer, a creature without rank or wealth, deprived even of a knowledge of the authors of his existence? It were akin to madness to harbour so extravagant an idea; and yet, strange as it may seem, Frederick Garston *did* harbour the notion of an eventual possibility that such a consummation might be brought about; and the greater the obstacles appeared to mar his happiness, the closer he hugged the deceitful anticipation to his bosom.

The story told by Lord Valoire regarding the parentage of

Sir George Elms had not been lost on him, but, on the contrary, had raised up in his mind a feeling of interest in behalf of the baronet which, but a few hours previously, he never would have dreamt it possible he could entertain. But why the sudden change in Sir George's manner? Whence the hitherto unheard of, and still unsought for, invitation to dinner? What interested motive could any one have in seeking the society of so humble a person as himself? These and many others were questions which the young secretary found it far easier to propound than to solve; so, inwardly determined to keep on his guard against any attack, though of what nature he could not conjecture the most remote shadow, Frederick Garston applied his hand to the knocker of the baronet's abode, and, in a few seconds, stood in the presence of his host.

"Nothing could be more flattering, Mr. Garston," commenced the baronet, extending his hand towards Frederick, on his entering the apartment,—“nothing can possibly be kinder than your tearing yourself away from such agreeable society as you possess the envied means of enjoying in Grosvenor-square, to enliven the dull hours of a confirmed bachelor like myself;” and, smiling most urbanely on his guest, the confirmed bachelor of twenty-five proceeded to ring for dinner.

“You'll meet nobody but Travers of the Lancers,” continued Sir George. “In fact, exclusive of the paucity of persons in town at this season of the year, I was so particularly anxious for the pleasure of cultivating your acquaintance that I plead guilty to the selfishness of monopolizing your conversation to myself.”

To such and similar harangues Frederick Garston scarce knew what reply to offer, so widely different were the flattering speeches of the baronet from his previous carriage towards him. That there was some hidden motive for such exceeding courtesy could not for an instant admit of doubt; but, as the object in view had not as yet been made manifest, our hero had only to wait patiently for the result.

To our readers the conduct of Sir George may not appear in so incomprehensible a light; and possibly his desire of ingratiating himself with the before despised secretary arose from the desirability of compelling Frederick to enact a part in the play which his inventive genius was concocting for his own immediate advantage.

Since his discovery that Mary Vernon possessed money independent of her father, Sir George bitterly repented the exertions he had made to promote her union with Lord Dropmore. Already had he heard his name mentioned as her affianced husband, and that, moreover, without contradiction, although

uttered in the presence of the lady's father; and, could he but draw off Lord Dropmore's increasing attention from his intended victim, more scope might be afforded for his purpose.

As it was, the superior cunning of the baronet had already roused in his friend's breast a feeling of jealousy and dislike towards our hero, and that, as has already been shown, arising from a fancied preference for the humble dependant, on the part of his cousin, whose society he had long since avoided.

On this matter Sir George had deeply cogitated, and at length arrived at the conclusion that nothing could tend so much towards estranging his friend from his entanglement in Gracechurch-street as a revival of those feelings for his cousin which some months previously he had possessed. Weak and vacillating as the baronet knew the young nobleman to be, still he could not so far count on his pliability as to expect him to change his affection from one lady to another as easily as he would cast off a garment; yet the stake to be played for was of great value, and well worth winning; and few things are to be gained in this world without risk and trouble in the pursuit.

In this dilemma it appeared to Sir George that nothing could prove so beneficial to his plan as to induce Garston, whose real feelings towards Miss Beecher the more practised watchfulness of the baronet had long since discovered, to persevere in those attentions to Lord Blanchard's niece which had already created such uneasiness and disquietude to his friend.

To effect this, it was necessary to become acquainted with the secretary; and trusting implicitly to his own powers of pleasing, he did not for an instant doubt but the advance once made on his part, he should speedily find himself in Garston's confidence.

That measure once effected, he resolved to urge him forward to the uttermost; and by dint of hints, inuendos and inventions, he was prepared to counsel the unsuspecting secretary so to conduct himself, as inevitably to bring down Lord Dropmore's fury on his head, while on the other hand he was equally prepared to launch forth any diatribe against his victim's presumption, whenever opportunity offered for gaining the ear of his lordship.

Influenced by these worthy motives, Sir George eagerly sought an opportunity for carrying his measures into effect, by courting an acquaintance with Garston; nor was it necessary to wait long, since being made conversant with the regularity of his proceedings, and informed of the very few houses where he visited, it was no difficult matter so to meet him in the streets, and then proffer that advance of courtesy which, by one party at least, was intended to be cultivated for as long time as the acquaintance proved advantageous to himself.

The only visible object in including Mr. Travers in the invitation, was to avoid the appearance of what Garston might have deemed "a dead set," on being closeted *tête à tête* with the baronet, and undergoing the various degrees of pumping, on a subject nearest his heart.

To effect this desirable object, the usual aid of iced champagne was of course brought into play; and backed by its powerful auxiliaries, hock, Burgundy, hermitage, and Cote Rotie, the plot bade fair to prosper.

"It has often struck me, my dear Garston," observed Sir George, pushing the claret towards his guest, "that notwithstanding the numerous opportunities which have indisputably presented themselves during the past season, you so seldom availed yourself of them, by joining the delightful parties which have taken place: and yet I scarce know why I should feel astonished; the charming family with whom you dwell in Grosvenor Square being so far superior to the frivolous trifling of which society is generally composed."

"I readily admit the kindness I experience, and the pleasure I derive from being permitted to remain in Lord Blanchard's family," replied the unsophisticated Frederick; but as regards society at large, I am so little conversant with what is termed the world, that it would be presumption on my part, were I to designate it by the harsh term you have just applied."

"Yet not unjustly so, I can assure you," responded the other; "and believe me, my dear sir, that the more intimate your converse with the world, the sooner will you discover the hollowness of what is termed its pleasures."

"Why, how now, Elms?" exclaimed the lancer, in astonishment, his large eyes extended to their utmost limits, through utter amazement. "Turned mentor and methodist together?—I should as soon have expected to hear a horse-dealer speak truth, as to listen to such grave assurances from your mouth."

"Perfectly correct ones, nevertheless," added the baronet, in a tone of unmingled gravity.

"Oh, no doubt, your reverence," responded the officer, "but, for my part, I see no good in trying to disgust Mr. Garston with the world, as you call it, before he has stretched forth his hand to gather any of its flowers. No, no; never mind," he continued, addressing himself to Frederick; "it is not every man who acts as he preaches, you know; and truth to say, whenever I hear a gentleman of my cousin Elms's known gallantry put on a regular Irvine face, and commence a lecture in the unknown tongue, I always decide in my own mind that he is at that moment concocting some extra-supernumerary piece of turpitude."

"You are far from being complimentary, this evening Travers," drily remarked the baronet.

"I seldom do waste my words in such nonsense," was the rejoinder; "but if you are going to devote the rest of the night to an elucidation of the ways and wickedness of this terrestrial globe, I shall wish you farewell; and shall be off to the club, or Steven's, or Long's, where I doubt not I shall find some of our people bound for Hounslow; so one more glass of claret, Elms, and now good night.—Good night, Mr. Garston," he added, jocosely; "take care of my righteous cousin, and I trust you will find profit and advantage from his advice." And so saying, the young lancer rang for his hat and gloves, and forthwith proceeded on his way.

Delighted beyond measure was Sir George, when his volatile relative took his departure; for although little suspecting how truly had his arrow shot home, Lucian Travers had sufficient insight into the baronet's character, to feel pretty certain that the unknown secretary was not summoned to Green Street without some hidden, though important reason. Yet as it mattered little to him what the cause might be, and not relishing the tone which the conversation appeared destined to assume, he deemed his time would be less unprofitably spent in seeking elsewhere more congenial companions.

The baronet's object in having broken their dinner *tête à tête*, was thus fully answered; and nothing could have suited his plans better, than that Lucian Travers should have quitted the room precisely when he did, thereby leaving the field open to his own peculiar devices and artifice.

As the bottle passed between the two new acquaintances, the baronet adroitly recurred to the conversation which had just been interrupted; nor was it long ere the person under examination evinced strong proofs of an absence of his usual discretion.

"My dear Garston," exclaimed the baronet, familiarly, "who would not envy you the brilliant prospects placed, I may say, within your reach,—nay, actually in your grasp. Fortune has indeed stood your friend; and the fairest flower of the aristocratic garden may, at your pleasure, be gathered to your bosom.—Nay, nay, now don't contradict me," he continued, smiling, on seeing his companion about to speak; "don't suppose me so blind as to have overlooked the decided preference which the lady evinces for your society over that of all others. Why have all the men about town fled from the contest, and tacitly, though most unwillingly, I confess, withdrawn from the pursuit? Why is this? Cannot you find an answer to my query?—Well then, I suppose I must reply to my own question:—thus,

then, simply because it was but too evident that while you remained, none others had a chance of success."

"Oh, Sir George," exclaimed Garston, evidently flattered, and visibly not improved by the various libations which the pressing hospitality of his host had compelled him to swallow; "nay, Sir George, you are laughing at me, now."

"Laughing at you, my dear fellow? I'll pledge my word nothing on earth is farther from my intention; and, were I not engaged myself, I verily believe I could find it in my heart to slay you, out of sheer envy of your success. Surely you are well aware your attachment to Lord Blanchard's beautiful niece forms the principal topic of conversation everywhere."

"Indeed I was not aware of anything of the sort," answered Frederick, thinking his host was progressing rather too rapidly, "neither can I see how the lady's sentiments are known to everybody, when as yet they are completely hidden from myself."

"And whose is the fault, I pray you?" inquired Sir George. "Why do you not at once ascertain them, or rather why not hear her confession from her own lips, since you cannot have avoided witnessing a thousand instances of preference shown you, amply sufficient to convince the most sceptical that the lady's heart is no longer at her own disposal."

"But then, Lord Dropmore?" added Garston, hesitatingly, and rapidly yielding to the bold assertions of his subtle companion. "How will Lord Dropmore act in the matter?"

"Lord Dropmore," repeated the baronet, in an affected tone of surprise. "What can Lord Dropmore have to do in the business? Has he not voluntarily withdrawn from the struggle, as did many others at witnessing your success? Surely Lord Dropmore cannot have any influence in that quarter? And indeed I confess my astonishment at hearing his name quoted as an obstacle likely to interfere with your wishes in the matter."

"But still," replied Frederick, momentarily forgetting the precaution which he had previously determined to adopt, "still, I must ever bear in mind that Lord Dropmore is not only the son of my benefactor, but also a cousin of——" and, hesitating to pronounce the name, the baronet instantly came to his relief, and, not being afflicted by any misplaced delicacy, he deemed the present a capital opportunity for breaking down the barrier at once.

"A cousin of Miss Beecher's, you were going to say," remarked the host. "True! but if all cousins were to be consulted when a lady is about to be married, I know not when time could be found for the ceremony."

"I said nothing about marriage, surely," remarked Frederick, confusedly.

"Did you not?" carelessly observed the other. "But, supposing you had, where would be the blame? Since to that finale will the lady's partiality for you most indisputably reach; and I candidly assure you that from no one will you derive more willing assistance than from myself, however little I may have it in my power to forward your views. But to tell the truth, my dear Garston," he continued, "I do not imagine any aid will be necessary for the furtherance of your wishes, beyond that which your appearance must produce in your behalf. But come, this long conversation has certainly entitled us to another cool bottle of claret, so fill your glass, and pledge me in a bumper to the health and happiness of Emily Beecher."

The inroad that the previous libations had effected on the secretary's nerves, coupled with the excitement into which the tenor of the evening's conversation had naturally thrown him must plead his sole excuse for readily agreeing to the somewhat indelicate proposal; but agree with the baronet he most indisputably did, if a ready acquiescence with the proposal betokened approval; and, raising himself from his chair, while in no small degree he was beholden to the table for support, our unfortunate hero, lifting the glass to his mouth, echoed in stentorian sounds the toast named by Sir George; and scarcely had the crystal goblet pressed his lips when, raising his eyes from the sparkling nectar which he held before him, his glance met the steady, vindictive gaze of the last man on earth whom he would have wished then and there to have encountered—Lord Dropmore.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MRS. PAGE.—"Hang him, dishonest varlet,
We cannot misuse him enough."
MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

So extremely vehement and energetic had Frederick Garston been, when doing honour to Sir George's proposed toast, that the sound of Lord Dropmore's entrance into the room was by him wholly unheeded; but, when the eyes of the young men met, and they stood confronted one before the other, it would have been difficult to say on which countenance the greatest emotion of surprise was depicted.

Nor was astonishment the sole feeling brought into play on
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the occasion ; for, on his lordship's part, an expression of deep dislike was manifestly portrayed ; and, on the other hand, our hero, stimulated with wine, and inflamed by the insidious advice of the baronet, was well inclined to demonstrate the true state of his feelings towards Lord Blanchard's son, in a far more undisguised manner than hitherto his better judgment had permitted.

Most assuredly it had been no part of Sir George's plans that the two persons upon whom he was exercising his peculiar talents for villainy should have thus met ; nor would he have invited Garston to his house on that occasion had he not understood that his friend Dropmore was so engaged elsewhere as to preclude the possibility of his making his appearance that evening. But whatever his plans and wishes might have been on that head, it was plainly evident that his calculations were erroneous ; and consequently he was compelled to exert himself, and make the best of the disagreeable circumstances as they had befallen. Yet, before he could commence his operations, Lord Dropmore anticipated his intention of breaking the silence by accosting Frederick Garston at once.

"I am confident," he commenced, gazing full on the secretary's flushed face, "I am confident, sir, that the Marquis of Blanchard will duly appreciate the honour conferred on him when he is informed with what zeal his secretary has thought proper to yell forth the name of a member of his family at this late hour of the night, and in such a strain as to convey the information to half the street that the discreet individual was making her the subject of a drunken toast."

"Sir — my lord,"—replied Garston, greatly agitated, and partly comprehending the imprudence of the conduct of which he had been guilty ; "I can assure you, Lord Dropmore"—

"Oh, sir, pray don't attempt any apology to me. A gentleman so renowned as my father's secretary for his upright and honourable conduct surely need not explain his acts to so humble a person as myself ;" and bowing in mock humility to the detected culprit, his features scowled forth the dark malignity of his heart.

"Certainly, my lord," answered Garston, "certainly, I confess"—

"Oh, you confess, do you ?" interrupted the other, eagerly ; "the immaculate secretary deigns to acknowledge his errors, or by what softer name shall I designate his condescension in thus making use of the name of a lady, a relative of my own ?"

"Come, come, Dropmore," interposed Sir George ; "you take the thing too seriously : you do, I assure you. If there was any fault, the blame should rest with me. I can explain

everything, I am confident, to your satisfaction. You are in error with regard to Mr. Garston, and, I must say, unjust."

"In error!" replied his lordship, becoming momentarily less and less capable of controlling his temper. "Tell me I am in error, Elms? Do you mean to say I did not hear my cousin's name shouted by this person as a toast whereby to excite him to a further stage of drunkenness? Do you tell me I am in error when I saw a braid of that lady's hair paraded as in triumph on this secretary's table, on purpose to attract the attention of any one who might enter the apartment, and thus tacitly boast of favours which never were and never shall be conferred? A noble device, truly," he added, sneeringly, "to bribe with a paltry portion of his wages some other mercenary menial to purloin the spoil, and then to exult in its possession!"

"Dropmore," again interrupted the baronet, "I request, I must insist upon this language ceasing. You are irritated, and possibly in some degree justly so, for I am wholly ignorant of the circumstances which you have this instant detailed; yet I cannot think so ill of Mr. Garston as to suppose otherwise than that you have been through some means or other greatly deceived, since I hold it impossible that any man of honour could be capable of acting in the manner you have described."

"Man of honour!" exclaimed Lord Dropmore, in an ironical tone of voice, his temper having completely mastered his judgment, "man of honour, truly! However, to-morrow we shall hear what excuse this highly honourable person will advance in extenuation of the liberty which he has this night thought proper to take with a name, the possessor of which is as undeniably his superior in all respects as others are inferior to him in cunning and deceit."

During these repeated attacks, the unfortunate object against whom the invectives were launched was rapidly regaining the ascendancy over his mental faculties which Sir George Elms, by precept and example, had so greatly aided to obscure. Bitterly, aye, most bitterly, did the unfortunate young man then repent the heedless and unguarded manner in which he had allowed himself to be entrapped into what he justly viewed would prove, in Lord Dropmore's hands, his utter ruin. But to stand by and listen to the abuse thus lavished upon him was more than the tamest nature could have undergone; seizing, therefore, the first moment that offered a cessation to his lordship's angry vituperations, Frederick Garston, summoning all his energies to his aid, endeavoured calmly to reply.

"My lord," he commenced, "if inadvertently I have been led into the folly of openly making mention of the name of a

lady as the subject of a toast, I am ready so far to acknowledge my error as to confess the extreme impropriety in my having done so; yet it is not to your lordship that I deem myself bound to render such explanation. Further than having uttered the name in question, I disown the committal of any action or thought whatever which could by bare possibility be tortured into a subject of disrespect; and for my veracity on that point I appeal to Sir George Elms, who indisputably will corroborate my assertion. With regard to your lordship's inventive genius, as exemplified in your history of the braid of hair, I have only to reply that, for the sake of another person not present, I once condescended to enter into an explanation on that subject, which must have been completely satisfactory to any save one predetermined to view all that regards me through a distorted medium. As I observed, *once* I descended to an explanation; but certainly I shall not do so again, further than to deny in the most direct terms the truth of the gross statement which you have been pleased to advance."

"Upon my word, sir," exclaimed his lordship, "on my word, Mr. Garston, you carry it bravely, and well is it for you that your plebeian origin and ignoble birth stand as a protection against my just chastisement."

"Chastisement, Lord Dropmore!" uttered Garston, "chastisement, and from whom?"

"From me," instantly replied the other, at the same time raising a small cane which he carried in his hand, and holding it over the head of his opponent.

"By heaven, this is too much!" exclaimed Garston; and springing forward, in an instant he wrenched the instrument from his adversary's grasp, and broke the stick in pieces.

The affair had now proceeded to a far greater length than Sir George ever wished it to arrive at, but so angry had been the previous discussion, and so irritated were both parties, that he found any efficient interference on his part impossible. Now, however, it was manifest that actions, not words, must be resorted to, so throwing himself hastily between the two, he seized the uplifted arm of Frederick Garston, and fortunate it was that he did so, for who can tell upon whom it might not at that moment have descended?

"Are you mad, Dropmore?" hurriedly exclaimed the baronet; "and you, Mr Garston, dare you raise your hand against a nobleman, the son of your benefactor, and in my house? For heaven's sake, gentlemen," he continued, really annoyed and greatly perplexed, "I implore, I entreat you to command yourselves. This is no place for midnight brawls, nor are you the persons who should engage in such an occupation. Lord

Dropmore, I must speak to you. Mr. Garston, I will meet you in half an hour at any place you please—Long's, Steven's, anywhere—but here you must plainly see the folly of remaining. Rest assured," he added, observing a reluctance on Frederick's part to leave the room; "rest confident, I will not lose sight of what is due to yourself, as also of what is due to Lord Dropmore; and again I entreat you to quit the house, and I promise to be with you in half an hour at Long's;" and taking Lord Dropmore by the arm, partly by entreaty, and aided by some slight force, he led his lordship into another apartment.

"Is this your boasted self-possession?" angrily exclaimed the baronet to his friend, on hearing the hall door close on Frederick Garston's departure. Is this the way you exemplify that equanimity of temper of which I have a thousand times heard you so loudly boast? To squabble, and in fact to be actually on the point of exchanging blows with one who is neither more nor less than your father's servant, a fellow of whom no one knows any thing; and who, for aught I can tell to the contrary, set the very thieves themselves upon Lord Blanchard, in order that his interference might be exhibited. On my word, Dropmore, you do little credit to my tutorship."

"You may spare your upraidings, Elms," replied his lordship, in no very pleasant mood, "for, on my word, it comes but ill from you to abuse this low born secretary, or whatever you may call him, when I find him closeted with yourself, and enjoying a *tête à tête* dinner, as much at his ease as though he were seated behind his disgusting counter at the apothecary's shop. How, in the name of heaven, got he here? and how comes it, that when the insolent upstart dared to pollute my cousin's name by pledging her health, how comes it, I ask, that you did not strike the reptile to the earth, or at least order your servants to kick him from your door?"

"Hard measures those, Dropmore," answered his friend, smiling; "but for the first, I just now thought you were somewhat inclined to make the experiment in your own person; and as regards the second, you perceive I have contrived to rid us of his presence without having recourse to the disagreeable alternative you recommend. No, no, Dropmore; come, be seated, allay your irascibility, and I will talk the matter over calmly with you; and, I doubt not, shall be enabled to satisfy your mind on all points."

Having thus separated the enraged antagonists, the baronet considered the chief difficulty in the business as already surmounted, at least as regarded Lord Dropmore; for, calculating on the influence he possessed over the young nobleman, he did not for an instant doubt his power of persuading him to the belief of whatever he might judge it expedient he should credit.

His first endeavour, therefore, was to convince Lord Dropmore that Frederick Garston held no higher place in the baronet's estimation than he did in that of his lordship; neither did he find it a matter of great difficulty, to instil the belief that his only object in bringing the secretary to Green street, was in the hopes of fathoming to what an extent he had permitted his presumption to carry him with regard to Miss Beecher; nor did Sir George hesitate for an instant in declaring that it was his firm belief that the secretary was determined to persevere in his suit.

"But," added the wily baronet, "why should that tend so greatly to your annoyance, Dropmore? Your cousin has long ceased to possess that interest in your eyes which she once held; and now that you are virtually engaged to another, why torment yourself about this business?"

"Why?" repeated the young nobleman; "for many reasons, to be sure. First, then, is it not necessary to check the gross presumption of this upstart, and by opening my father's eyes to his deep laid schemes, have him driven from the house, again to herd with the ignoble wretches from whom a foolish fit of sentimental gratitude raised him? Can you ask why, when you behold a creature like Emily Beecher ready to throw herself away on a penniless adventurer?"

"All that and much more may be very true," replied Sir George, "and so far I coincide with you, that his plans should be watched, detected, and thwarted; yet there cannot exist any reason why you are to step forth in so open a manner, and attack an individual who, by his position in society, and particularly in your family, is comparatively deprived of the power of retaliation. What I would recommend would be this—"

"Beg his pardon, like a penitent child, I suppose, and pray him to add lustre to our family, by marrying my cousin?" interrupted the other.

"By no means," responded the baronet, "but I would not so openly evince my hostility. That he has a great affection either for Miss Beecher, her rank in society, or her supposed wealth, is evident to any one seeing them in the same room together for a few minutes; and to tell the truth, I am not at all confident that the partiality evinced on his side is not in some measure returned by the lady."

"Did he tell you so?" eagerly exclaimed Lord Dropmore, rising suddenly from his seat. "Did he dare to say so?"

"Not exactly," calmly replied the narrator; "but sit down and listen to what I have to propose. Nay," he added, observing his friend rapidly pacing the room from side to side, "nay, Dropmore, unless you will control these useless bursts of pas-

sion, it were frivolous for me to waste my breath and time in advising you what course to adopt."

"Well, well," rejoined the other, peevishly, and reseating himself; "go on, for heaven's sake, and let us hear the end of it."

"Which end is easily arrived at," remarked Sir George, "and thus it is: I would advise a greater show of cordiality towards the secretary, were it only to throw him off his guard, and thus put you in possession of circumstances which, if you still keep him at a distance, he may be too wary to disclose. You may distantly hint to Lord Blanchard that a knowledge of Garston's dissipated habits has been made known to you; neither would it be a bad plan, could you enlighten your father on the subject of the toast which, between you and me, was indisputably a most insolent proceeding, and a good criterion whereby to judge of the refined delicacy of his feelings. That effected, and Lord Blanchard's good opinion of him once shaken, I doubt not but your cousin will speedily return to a sense of what is due to herself and to her family."

"Why, Elms, you speak as though Emily really had an attachment for this fellow," interrupted Lord Dropmore.

"I speak as I believe," replied the other, "but remember, it is only surmise on my part; no one ever told me so directly, whatever may have been hinted; but enough of this at present. And now for the case in hand. In half an hour I have promised to meet this man at Long's, and of course he is there waiting for an explanation or adjustment of this unpleasant business."

"What's to be done, Elms?" inquired his lordship. "Of course I should as soon think of going out with my father's cook, as with his secretary; and as for sending him an apology, that is equally out of the question."

"I don't see any occasion for going out," remarked the peacemaker; "but you should bear in mind that the first aggressor was yourself, and by you most certainly the olive branch should be presented. If you will leave it to me, I'll so arrange matters that no concession shall be made on your part, but I must entreat a somewhat more agreeable reception for Garston, when you meet."

"Do as you will, Elms," replied the young nobleman. "I am confident you will not commit me, so I'll willingly leave the matter in your hands, the more so, as the report of a squabble with a plebeian would not add much to the glory of our escutcheons; so pray do as you list, and many thanks for taking so much trouble."

"Sensibly spoken," said his friend, "and I may also reckon

on a more conciliating manner towards Garston, when you see him?"

"If you advise that it should be so, most certainly I will do your behest, the rather, that you allege it will lead to a more speedy arrival of his downfall; for by some unaccountable feeling, I have ever had a sort of detestation for the man, which perhaps I cannot easily give a reason for; but so it is, and to own the truth, Elms, I hate him."

"And, therefore, should strain every nerve to prevent his carrying off your cousin," added the baronet, delighted at seeing how quickly and readily the poison was working.

"But what of Gracechurch street?" he continued, "and how do things prosper in that quarter? Give me a little insight into matters there, for I have but a few seconds at command ere I again face the pugnacious secretary."

In reply to the question, Lord Dropmore stated that, after the introduction of Mr Vernon and his daughter to his father's family, Lord Blanchard and Emily appeared to have arrived at the same conclusion which most persons would reach, on making a similar acquaintance; namely, that the merchant might be a very upright, conscientious promoter of traffic, but somewhat unused to good society, while it was utterly impossible to affirm that the daughter was otherwise than pretty and engaging. Sir George Elms was still looked upon by the marquis as the intended bridegroom, and Emily Beecher could not help mentally commiserating the fate of so young and artless a being, destined, as she supposed, to pass through life with a person of so unenviable a reputation as her betrothed enjoyed. Meanwhile, the object of so much solicitude, naturally averse to speaking of her engagement with any third person, beheld in the acquaintance thus commenced an auspicious omen, and the removal of one barrier, at least, to her ultimate union with Lord Dropmore; while the father, elated at the impression Mary's gentle manners and ingenuous countenance could not fail in effecting in her behalf, foolishly considered Sir George's project was fast hurrying to a fulfilment of his own wishes.

Thus actuated by a variety of conflicting interests, each party was made, as it were, to enact a portion of the puppet show, the strings of which had been arranged and were then pulled by the baronet. The marquis was probably the one least interested in the business, for having sought the city acquaintance solely with a wish of obliging his son, he being under the impression that the lady was destined as the bride of the baronet, rather than as an eventual sharer of his own coronet, he troubled himself but little about the denizens of the East, after the dinner had passed over.

Hitherto the conduct of Lord Dropmore had been cautious in the extreme ; and not one of those from whom it was intended the truth should be hidden, entertained the most distant idea that the affluent daughter of the merchant was the object on whom he had fixed his affections and destined for his bride.

Nevertheless, the season was now over, and even the few who yet lingered in London, talked of a speedy departure. No time was to be lost. The merchant looked for an early settlement of money or of matrimony. Lord Dropmore was equally desirous of possessing the means of satisfying his numerous creditors ; and the baronet well knew that, if once withdrawn from London, it would be difficult to say to what extent of rebellion against the paternal wishes, his many difficulties might not hurry his noble acquaintance.

It was therefore plainly evident that something must be done. It was imperatively necessary that Lord Dropmore should be withdrawn from the society of Mary Vernon, but it was of equal importance that, before the baronet finally bade adieu to the five thousand pounds which was to have enriched his coffers on his friend's union, he should satisfactorily arrange matters, so as to ensure his own union with his lordship's destined wife.

Resolved on the course to be pursued, and bent upon urging the denouement to a quick issue, Sir George Elms carefully treasured up in his memory the various points of information he had gathered from his lordship ; and pleading the arrival of the hour at which he had promised to meet Frederick Garston at Long's, he bade his friend good night, and entering his cab, drove rapidly towards Bond street.

STANZAS.

WRITTEN IN HORNSEY CHURCHYARD.

BY MRS CRAWFORD.

Oh ! softly, softly tread,
For this is holy ground ;
Here sleep the hallow'd dead,
In slumber how profound !

That drooping cypress throws
Its shadows o'er a tomb,
That tells a widow's woes,
And crowns a hero's doom.

This simple stone—look here !
A mother sleeps beneath ;
That name, of all most dear,
That human lips can breathe !
Her loving heart is cold ;
And all its ceaseless care,
And all its love untold,
Now darkly slumber there.

There weeping flow'rs grow wild,
There, moulder side by side
The old man, and the child,
The widow, and the bride :
And ah ! (to each how dear !)
The husband, and the wife,
Both sweetly sleeping here,
As they were *one* in life.

There, sculptured marble shows
The rich man's last abode,—
No sweeter *his* repose,
For all that cumbrous load :
It tells of pleasures past,
Of pride, and goodly cheer ;
The balance struck at last,
And all made level here.

Green mounds, without a stone,
Point out the poor of earth ;
And though to fame unknown
The mem'ry of their worth,
Their humble roofs, bereft,
Still point their path above,
By many a record left,
Of patience, truth, and love.

Here exiles, from the land
Of troubled France, repose,
Far from home's kindred band,
Untold their names, and woes :
They sleep their lonely sleep,
No more to grief a prey,
And none come here, to weep
The loved ones past away.

How vain, how worthless, when
We slumber in the dust,
The marble, or the pen,
So oft to truth unjust!
Recording angels note,
In Heaven's eternal roll,
(*Their* blame or praise unbought,)
Just audit of the soul.

For all alike will stand,
Before the judgment-throne,
(The poor at God's right hand,
For *them* He calls *his own* :)
When from his cavern'd bed,
Ocean shall yield his prey,
The graves give up their dead,
And earth shall pass away.

PORTUGAL AND FREE MASONRY.

My last Peninsular anecdote was concluded at Lisbon, whither I had come from Spain to join the frigate, (to *which I appointed myself*,) but she had sailed previous to our arrival, and the sloop-of-war now in the Tagus was likely to be stationary there for some time.

Being in no hurry, therefore, I resolved to sojourn a little in the capital of Portugal, and proceed over land to meet one of the English packets which then touched regularly at Corunna; nor was my young companion averse to an arrangement, which promised to abridge the sea voyage.

Among the hospitalities we there experienced, none were greater than those extended to us by the officers of the British sloop-of-war; and I cannot forget the characteristic incident which followed our first dinner in the ward room.

It was this. A party of us had arranged, after a few bottles of Colares, which, though exhilarating, is rarely inebriating (a quality usually and justly attributable to champagne), to visit the opera house. For this purpose rather more care than usual had been taken in the arrangement of our tights, whites, silks, and black stocks: but the warm temperature rendered cloaks

needless, although the cocked hat was hoisted as a matter of course.

So equipped, then, we started about dusk, and being safely landed, proceeded to walk the remaining distance, picking our way carefully through streets which, in those days, were well known to abound with heaps of filth amassed for the night-man's cart to remove at his leisure, and for rats to feed upon *ad libitum* !

But my friends had forgotten to guard against another more impending evil, by carrying umbrellas or otherwise, that might partially have protected them.

Now you must know, it was then permitted for the inhabitants, after calling out "Agoa vai," (a warning, by the way, which oftener followed than preceded the act,) to throw everything out of window into the streets, which in most civilized countries is conveyed from the houses by means of a drain or sewer of some sort. Not so here; and moreover the notice, *if* regularly given from the first, second, third, fourth, or even fifth story, reached the passengers below so irregularly, that on hearing it, one often "rushed against Scylla by avoiding Charybdis."

This was exactly what happened to us, for on hearing the well-known cry, my impetuous companions ran forward and received the contents of a bumper pail upon their well-trimmed uniforms! Great was the indignation excited thereby; and still greater the mortification at finding themselves, in *more senses than one*, unfitted for the boxes of a royal theatre!

Before returning to their ships, however, a council was held by the injured parties, as to how they might best be revenged for such an insult offered to the officers of Her Majesty's navy. It was in vain. I endeavoured to persuade these angry tars, that none could be obtained; they resolved to try, and for this purpose one of our number was desired to fetch the boat's crew, while the rest got together a sufficient supply of missiles to assail the offending house, although, perhaps, every other inhabitant save one was totally ignorant of the occurrence.

Of course, Jack was delighted at the fun; and at the word of command, a dozen fellows began to batter away.

To those who are acquainted with Lisbon, and the volubility of its inhabitants, about twenty of whom probably occupied each floor, I need hardly describe the scene that followed; and to those who don't know Portugal, but have, perhaps, met foreigners in England, I must leave the imagination of this extraordinary fracas, heightened as it was by an assemblage in the streets which joined its shouts for or against the "Yo! heave ho!" of my impetuous allies, and was loudly echoed by the howl of at least a hundred dogs, who, it is well known, are allowed to

forage about the streets and destroy a few of those enormous rats, or cats, which are continually crossing one's path.

Luckily there then existed in Lisbon a well disciplined mounted police, under the orders of the Count de Novion, that fairly put to shame the impotent force which existed in Lisbon, with its rattles, lanthorns, and dogberries; and this force being promptly summoned, I began to think the matter serious and to assume the neutral attitude of an interpreter. This I did so successfully that, aided by a natural desire on the part of most people in Portugal to preserve an *enteinte cordiale* with England, permission was obtained for the English officers to retire to their ships; before the light of day should too clearly expose the orgies of the night.

Various rumours of course succeeded, but as there were very few reporters, and still less newspapers about, matters became tolerably hushed before we started.

This we did in a few days; my young protégé having dismissed the faithful Lorenzo with dispatches to his parents, assuring them of our safety thus far.

Nor did we think it necessary to hire another domestic, as we proceeded with a calvacade of travellers and muleteers to Oporto.

The roads were indeed passable for Calaissas; but no expedition beyond twenty or thirty miles *per diem* could be acquired thereby.

Coimbra is about half way; and being a university, was the first place of which we had prepared to take much notice; but it deserved little, and our party resolved to give it less, so that we only rested there one night, and I should hardly have named it, except for a little incident that occurred while the mules were preparing at daylight the next morning.

This being in general an operation of, at least, half an hour, I thought it a good opportunity to dispose of a little superfluous beard at the barber's opposite to our filthy *Caza de Pasto*, which means an inn, and serves for one; but neither provided warm water, soap, nor towel. The latter of these, therefore, we carried with us, but they were already packed up! so (as I said before) the projecting pole tempted me across the way, where, from the bustle going on, I expected to find "*Figaro la*" ready for me.

Judge of my surprise, however, (who had never been shaved by any one before, or since,) to see a fine buxom wench come forward with a razor in one hand and a basin in the other, ready to perform the operation. Of course I submitted, and was not sorry to have a soft hand, (for such it was,) instead of a rough one against my chin, as the substitute in those parts for a

brush. Nor were a pair of black eyes, looking down on me, so objectionable as an old fellow's grey ones might have been.

The former two quite sparkled with fun, when I modestly requested the fair Tonsorina to spare my young moustaches, and almost seemed to say, why, Señor, I can see none.

The Students, however, had I dare say taught her better manners, for she simply replied that she was sufficiently aware of their importance in these soldiering days, and therefore she never removed a single moustache without asking permission.

Sometimes, however, she added, I do curl them a little for our young gentlemen.

And your lips too, I thought, for they were very pretty ones, and seemed as if they could pout a bit at times. But here our agreeable colloquy was cut short by the Muleteer's summons to start, so paying my fair shaver rather liberally, we parted.

Nor must I detain you too long on the road with these little adventures, or I shall never reach Oporto, and the chief incident which I had prepared to recount.

In two days then, after leaving Coimbra, we found ourselves on the banks of the Douro, viz. Villanueva, where all the merchants have their cellars or lodges full of Port wines; and here for some unaccountable reason our conductor chose to rest several hours in sight of the very city to which we were bound, and in a wretched hovel too.

However, something new may be picked up every where, and I learnt for the first time from a Portuguese soldier, who was drinking beside us, that to the valour of himself and his comrades, (who were looking on) did the Duke of Wellington owe all his victories in Portugal.

Of course it did not become us to dispute the palm with such suspicious looking *Allies*, and we cautiously declined the aid they offered us in passing the bridge of boats, by which we shortly entered the beautiful city of Oporto.

Here we were tempted to rest several weeks, enjoying the munificent hospitality of a Portuguese host.

To describe in detail the many acts of kindness we experienced would be tedious. I confine myself therefore to one, because that was the grand Fongao of all, and given specially out of compliment to us, who being then young, may be pardoned the vanity wherewith I even now record it.

This consisted, of first, a fete champetre, got up at Signor J. F. P's beautiful quinta, to which all the elite had been invited to meet us, and where on arriving (rather late) I found the ladies ranged on one side of the arcadian bower and the gentlemen on the other.

Dinner being already served, I was desired to choose *any*

lady I pleased to escort to the table. Now this was rather an awkward task, happening to *know* a few of them, but I *happened also* to have cast my eyes upon a very beautiful girl on entering the room, and she was then near me. So affecting indifference, I immediately extended my arm in that direction and it was accepted, but not without a frown from one young Minerva on the other side, and perhaps had I dared look further, a second Juno might have been found also to threaten vengeance.

However, the repast went off gloriously—healths were drunk, and heroes toasted till the music warned us to proceed slowly back to the bower, in which dancing soon commenced. Of course my Venus was my first partner, but alas, she had to pay for the compliment; since those unlucky spurs I won at Mertola, being placed on the heels for this occasion, caught her muslin train, and nearly upset me while it destroyed her beautiful dress for the evening. But she bore it like a queen.

How the other disappointed goddesses did smile at the moment I won't say, nor how I tried to assuage their ire by waltzing with each. Enough that everybody seemed pleased at last, and that the envious rent I made in fair C's robe only served to exhibit the sweetness of her temper, and perhaps, to conclude that excellent match she afterwards made with an English friend of mine, now alive and well.

Long may he and she continue so—and now to my principal story.

The evening before our departure, my worthy host came into the room where I was preparing for that purpose, and thus addressed me; but previous to so doing, I should add, he begged the door might be locked, and each window so darkened that no one could look in; betraying at the time such an unsettled look that I almost entertained fears as to his mysterious object.

But no, he was too good a fellow to justify this, besides I had done him no harm, while, on the contrary, there was a prospect of my rendering future services to his house. So, taking a seat close by him, I invited the communication, which he made in these words:—

“My dear friend Senor S——, I am about to take a great liberty with you, and make a powerful appeal to your humanity, which, if unable to accede to, I must hope you will consider as a most sacred and confidential one, upon which the life of a fellow-creature depends.”

I assured him it should be so considered, and that it would afford me sincere pleasure to have a safe opportunity of reciprocating some of those civilities he had so liberally extended

towards my companion and myself, the more particularly, if by so doing, I could save the life of a fellow-creature.

"Well then," said he, "perhaps you are aware that free-masonry is proscribed in Portugal, and that notwithstanding this, many of its votaries are to be found among our priesthood, who, if discovered, would be either incarcerated for life, or subjected to penalties little better than death."

I acknowledged my ignorance, however, of such a fact, and also my astonishment at its existence in a christian country, declaring at the same time my readiness to frustrate those cruel edicts against an institution established for the benefit of mankind.

"A thousand thanks, my honoured friend," he exclaimed, "for thy avowal. It is exactly what I want you to do on behalf of a most amiable and accomplished scholar of our church, who, having become a free-mason, in the hope of assisting the distressed, has been detected by his superiors in practising its rites, and if found in Oporto to-morrow evening, will be instantly conveyed to the Castle of R——, and there imprisoned for the term of his existence. He is at present concealed at my quinta, but cannot remain long there in safety; if, however, you will permit him to accompany you to-morrow morning, disguised as your servant, and described in the passport as such, he may escape!"

Of course I could not refuse a request coming from such a quarter, and in such a cause, though evidently attended with some risk to myself as well as to my young protégé, whom I resolved for the present to keep in ignorance of the domestic, and his rank, whom I had substituted for our late servator Lorenzo.

Arrangements, therefore, were accordingly made between Signor P—— and me without delay, and before day-break the next morning, poor Rodriguez (as we will call him) appeared at our door with the mules and baggage, having previously disguised himself in a wig, and fustian coat suitable to his assumed station. On the pack-saddle, moreover, he mounted, following young Francisco and myself as we jogged on beside the muleteer, discussing, *soto voce*, the servant's probable qualities and appearance, whom I had thus hastily engaged.

But, it was difficult to disguise the aristocratic bearing of so elegant a man as Rodrigues (for this purpose) unfortunately was, and, attracted by his appearance, Francisco (Spaniard like) soon fell into familiar conversation with him, and quickly noticed to me the very distinction of which I wished the youngster ignorant. I treated the remark lightly, although with inward alarm, I confess. Nor was the latter decreased,

when at night, I saw how bunglingly poor Rodrigues unstrapped the luggage, and tried to cook some supper. Indeed I pitied him from my heart, and quietly helped to do both, while I saw tears stealing from his dark intellectual eye, and hoped all would yet end well.

Next day, however, an incident occurred, which had well-nigh marred all my plans, and did excite such suspicion, that I was obliged to explain the whole case to Francisco, to prevent if possible such a result. It was as follows:—

We had occasion to pass a river in a boat, and the wind being fresh, blew off both the hat and wig of our unfortunate Rodrigues, thus exposing the shorn scalp of a priest, and the head of a gentleman, covered with beautiful hair.

Every one in the boat looked aghast, but strange to say, no one uttered a word for several minutes, while the unlucky hero of this scene himself turned deadly pale.

The boatmen suspended their labours as young Francisco gazed at me with a stare, to which I could only return an affected smile little in accordance with my inward thoughts and feelings, (for I well knew the singular fact that we were in sight of that very fortress to which Rodrigues would be sent if betrayed.) But alarm I endeavoured to conceal; and ordering the hat and wig to be recovered, I gave both to their owner, while I abused him for a fool in trying to pass for a friar when in Oporto, presented double pay to the boatmen, called Francisco aside to explain to him the truth, and pushed forward with every possible alacrity till we had passed the frontier into Spain.

There, however, we did not feel at ease, fearing the same prejudice might exist among Spaniards against Free-masonry as with the Portuguese, but, luckily for us, national prejudice did, to a certain extent, preclude one country from seeking the culprit of another, be his crime what it might.

Still not a soldier, or stranger of any kind, crossed our path without disturbing the equanimity of all; for even the muleteer evidently felt himself implicated in something he knew not what, and cared little to inquire.

However, we reached Corunna safely, and, after sojourning there four days, an English packet appeared, into which we embarked, and knowing we were now safe, Rodrigues was authorized to throw off his menial garb and join our table; but for twenty-four hours at least, after losing sight of land, he would not venture to do so, and only by degrees did he develope to the delighted passengers his affable manners, and many accomplishments.

Besides being a master of Hebrew, he was a fine classical

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scholar, and spoke French with a fluency at that time rare among the Portuguese.

Well might every one on board deprecate the barbarity and ignorance of a nation which would immure for life such a man, and for such a cause.

Nevertheless this ill-fated being would seem doomed to misfortune, as, on landing at Falmouth, an order appeared to have been lodged at the Custom House, there to arrest a person of his name, viz. Rodrigues; and, though the Christian appellation was different, as well as the description of his features, the officers would only permit him to land, but not proceed to London till an explanation had been received from the Alien Office.

The poor fellow wept bitterly, and I could with difficulty reassure him of his personal security, even though he might not for a while be allowed to go at large.

He fell upon his knees to thank God for this, and afterwards to offer me his grateful acknowledgements for being the instrument of his salvation, when, after recommending him to the care of an honest banker at Falmouth, I prepared to proceed with young Francisco to London.

The chaise was at the door, and I desired him to get into it while I settled the bill. This done, I was about to follow when, to my amusement, I found Francisco and the old chamber-maid mutely exchanging curtsies for bows, to the diversion of boots, waiter, and ostler; for it seems she, not knowing me to be paymaster, had civilly reminded the young Don of her claims, which he not understanding construed into a farewell blessing, and returned accordingly the lady's obeisances.

One other incident only occurred on our journey worth recording, which was that Francisco, having hurt his side in landing, felt the shaking of a Cornish road now and then severely; whereupon he exclaimed, instead of Oh dear! "Hoi de me! Hoi—Hoi," which the drivers, taking to be an order to stop, did so continually, to my great annoyance at first, but latterly to our joint amusement; for grave as my young senator was in later days, he was a merry fellow then. So was I.

To conclude then. Rodrigues was shortly liberated, came to London, and for many years conducted a Portuguese paper with great success, which invariably inveighed against the tyrants in Portugal who would put down that Freemasonry which was sanctioned by so enlightened a nation as Great Britain!

LINES.

BY C. E. NUGENT.

LONG months have passed away—but is there peace?
 A weary weight of years they seem to me.
 I've wandered far in other climes, and seen
 The early sun illumine each mountain peak
 And vale, all glad with promise of the Spring.
 And days have crept along—a warmer sun
 Has lit up Nature's face with brightest hues
 In vain for me. A shadow, all unseen
 To other eyes, glooms o'er my onward path.
 The lark may hymn its orisons on high,
 And from the river's vine-clad banks may rise
 The sound of merry voices, some rustic chaunt
 Perchance of home, waking the echoes round.
 Or it may be comes floating down the vale
 The solemn sound of a far-off Village Bell,
 Summoning to prayer; all, all in vain for me.
 Ah! many a heart there is, all undefiled
 By contact with this world of woe and strife,
 Like to a wild rose on its native hills,
 Breathing a purer air, more free from taint
 Than gaudier plants, nourished by wealth below.
 Such a heart as this the only boon I crave,
 Sharing my griefs, would lighten half their load,
 The sunnier hours would make them doubly sweet.
 Still *this* wish is vain, it may not, cannot be.

E'en as to the Ark the Dove returned, unfound
 A resting-place whereon to place its foot,
 Its drooping wing telling more plain than words
 A wilderness of waters all around,
 E'en so will I return to the Church-yard lone,
 Where sleeps the best of Parents and of men;
 Then, when the Bell peals forth on a Sabbath morn,
 Bend low the knee in humbleness and prayer;
 There, oft as my lonely lot my spirit grieves,
 Weep o'er my Father's grave.

A FEW YEARS IN THE LIFE OF JOHN TEMPLEMAN

SHOWING HOW HE WENT TO LONDON, AND WHAT HE DID THERE.

BY JOHN WEBB.

CHAPTER I.

How beautiful is the evening when, after the close of a long and sultry day, the sun with jolly face bathes himself in the deep west, and the cool breezes that have hidden themselves till now, come forth from every shady nook and forest dell, laden with perfume from a thousand flowers !

Thus it is in the country ; but it is also beautiful in towns, for there the sons of toil, though they cannot see it lit up with gold in the distance, can view it reflected in the sky above, and can see the soft down-like clouds that turn their crimson edges to the west, and can watch the departing sunshine flashing back from roof and steeple.

Holy time this, too, when the poor man, weary with labour, hears in the low voice of evening, bright things of happier and better worlds ; or, as he stands at the door of his little dwelling, remembers how, years ago, he was a boy, and scarcely knew what a great city was ; and how he wandered in green lanes and broad fields, the sun glowing as it is now.

Perhaps he remembers how, on an eve like this, he first began to love her who is now his wife ; and, turning to her with a fond recollection beaming on his face, finds that she is thinking of it too.

Then it is that the public house and the coarse noisy revel seem full of folly and sin ; and the better thoughts of the mind and feelings of the heart put to shame such scenes.

It was at such a time as this, that young Templeman stood in the dingy old parlour of Mr. Grubthorpe, and at his side, both looking out at the sunset that glowed warmly upon their faces.

What keen gray eyes those were that seemed to look through and to anticipate every thought of the young man, and with

what extremely victorious politeness the man of the world and of business let the burning words run past his ear, like water from the plumage of a bird.

Burning words they were ; for his visitor had gone there with a beating, trembling heart, to tell his love for the old man's child ; how he had first met her by accident, and from that moment was her slave ; and how, hour after hour, he had watched for her ; how, night after night, he had prayed for her ; and how a darling hope had sprung up, like a beautiful flower, in his heart, that she loved him also.

"Sir," replied Mr. Grubthorpe, "young men like you have no business with wives ; attend to business, sir ; look after money, sir, and then talk of marrying." He forgot how, when he was young, he had adored the mother of that fair girl, and how he sought and won her—he a poor clerk, and she rich and beautiful.

It was a strange sight to see the tempest of passion that raged in the breast of John Templeman—for that was his name—as he heard this cold speech ; but he mastered his feelings, asked for liberty to hope that when a few years had gone, and he had advanced himself in life, he might again seek her hand.

"No, you may not ! I have better views for her ; I intend to do my duty as a father, and to see her properly and respectably settled," said Mr. Grubthorpe.

"But would you, Mr. Grubthorpe, would you sacrifice her happiness to such a position ? oh, would you deny her the man she loves, and make her miserable for life ?" said poor John.

He was reasoning without the slightest effect ; the lady's father was a rich man, and what, in his own opinion, was more, a rich merchant ; and his age of sentiment being over, he could not see as his young visitor did ; and, indeed, shortly so excited that young man's ire, by his cool rejoinders, that, with a burst of impetuous eloquence, he told him that they had upon their knees vowed to love no other ; that, in spite of every obstacle, she should be his ; and that if her father would not sanction a match that heaven approved, he would do without such sanction.

The old man strode quietly to the door, and opening it wide, said as quietly :—

"Sir, you forget yourself, and would make a fool of me. My daughter you will not have, while I live ; and if you darken these doors again, my old arms shall thrust you out."

The suitor turned to go, and then back, and tried to speak, but his tongue clave to his mouth, and he went away without another word.

CHAPTER II.

THE little coach office of Sigtown is nearly deserted now, but at the time I speak of, it was full of life and activity; and no part or appurtenance was so bustling and pervading as little Billy Bolt, the factotum of the place. Billy was always busy, never had he been known to be absent, never idle, and the circle of his existence was as unbroken by variety as a man's well could be. He also had just noticed the beautiful sunset, and a "fast-coach" thought ran through his mind, that a ride outside of a smart turn-out would be very pleasant; but he dismissed the—to him—inglorious idea, and worked away his momentary reflection. A wonderful man was Billy. He could balance more portmanteaus upon his little back, than long Jack the porter; and he could run faster than Tom the potboy, who was no joke in that species of locomotion.

The evening passed; night came, no rest for Billy. Coach after coach arrived and departed, sleepier and sleepier grew the face of the passengers; indeed, one old lady was lifted out and back, snoring all the while; and one old gentleman wanted to know whether it was not time to get up, and grumbled much for hot water wherewith to shave. At last, all was quiet as the clock struck three. Billy slowly and solemnly wrapped a ponderous cloak round his little body, and with a mysterious frown first looked and then entered a little cupboard, and shut himself in. Sleep closed his eyelids—sleep profound, but noisy.

Scarcely a sound disturbed the silence of the night, save the ticking of the little Dutch clock, and the rustling of the ashes as they sank lower and lower in the grate, and a great bird seemed to come and overshadow the candle, which then, like a baleful spirit, gave out darkness and shadows only.

Oh, how beautifully that nose of Billy discoursed to itself, and how the notes of his resling grew louder and louder; now, like a restless bottle of froth—now, like an insane trombone, and now sighing like the night wind amongst the chimney-pots.

Hark! what was that?—it was a knock;—another! Billy first snorted; then said very softly, "Who's there?" and then crept out of his den.

"Let me in—it's all right," replied a voice.

"Right as a trivet!" whispered Billy; and then he unbarred the door, and let the visitors in.

They were two—a man, and with him a female, who, though

closely enveloped in a multitude of garments, shivered as if with cold, and lay almost lifeless in his arms.

Billy evidently knew what was the matter, and handed a chair; all three looked away from each other, and all three as nervous and dreary as three antagonistic old ladies at tea.

Soon another coach,—soon she and he were inside, and away into the cold, dark night.

Oh, how dark and dreary, how ghastly and fearful was that long journey! Mile after mile they rolled on past shadows, each deeper and deeper than the last, now of a tall hedge that shut them in like a huge wall, now of trees that stood with outstretched arms, as if to stop the way; and then they passed through a long, dismal wilderness, whose dim outline lay miles broad, and once along by the side of a huge chasm that yawned as if to swallow them.

They were alone in the coach, and she leaned in the corner farthest from him. A hundred times, he would have taken one of her little hands in his, and pressed her to his heart; but she repulsed him, not unkindly but sorrowfully, and wept as she did so. How he prayed for morning, and light, or sleep for her.

All three came at last together, as they often will to tired hearts; and she was as quiet as a child, with tears trembling upon her long dark eyelashes, and her bosom still heaving with sobs in her sleep—he watching her as a miser would his treasure. Glorious landscapes, parks, houses, streets, shops, roar, bustle, and confusion rushed by the window, but he never looked away from her face, and woke as from a trance when, with a whirl and clatter, the coach dashed into the inn yard and the guard flinging open the door shouted that this was London.

John Templeman, for of course it was he, almost carried her into the inn, and she then for the first time seemed to cling to him for protection.

The people of the house were very kind, and treated her like an invalid, as indeed, she almost was; and John was not afraid to leave her in their charge, while he went out into the city. When he was gone, she begged to be left alone, and she was so in an old dark room, the black oak wainscot of which made it look like a huge chest. Upon the walls were pictures: one of a stern old cavalier, with sword in hand and bleeding front, fighting his way through a crowd of arms, angry faces, and shining steel. He was a tall, athletic man, and she fancied that he bore some resemblance to her lover; and that thought brought up images of horrible deeds of vengeance and rage. It was with a aching heart that she turned away—another was of an

old man, whose eyes seemed to follow her round the room, and to reproach her for what she had done. To look upon that venerable face, was more than she could bear, and she turned away again. This time to the picture of a matronly woman, whose kind eyes beamed upon all in the room. Alas even there poor Emma saw chiding, and the look of love that so calmly beamed down upon her seemed mingled with something of sorrow.

How those old portraits speak to us ! How they still remain unchanged, though years pass by ; and stand either to approve, or to condemn, as they be good or bad who look. Stern accusers they to the coward, or weak in heart. Sterner judges to the dark mind, and the false hand ; beaming also with calm love and trust to those in whose life love and trust has dwelt.

CHAPTER III.

THAT morning brought terrible confusion to the house of Mr. Grubthorpe. His daughter was missed very soon after he came down to breakfast, and he raged about the house like a madman. Poor Mrs. G. only cried and begged him not to be violent.

"Violent?" cried he ; "has she not deserted me ; run off with a vagabond that hasn't a shilling ; hadn't I told him that he shouldn't have her. What business, Mrs. G., what business has he to go and rob me ? Don't sit there like a goose, but get my trunk ready. No, I'll go without—I'll never rest till I find him. I'll shoot him, by G—d, I will. He rushed straight to the coach-office, then to the inn, and in ten minutes more was off, helter, skelter, on the road. Oh ! that mad chase. Miles of fields, trees, cottages, villages, flew bye like lightning ; clouds of dust whirled round them ; the carriage rocked to and fro like a ship at sea, while every screw and bolt in it shrieked, and groaned as if in pain. Whip and spur, whip and spur ; dashing on headlong ; the horses, with starting eyes and flying manes, strained every muscle. Still the old man shouted, "Faster, faster !" He was flung about into all corners of the agitated vehicle, and yet, still he screamed, "Faster, faster." They grazed the wheel of a coach, and the postillion was cut across the face by the whip of its driver : he scarcely noticed the blow, but still held on. They came upon a crowd of people that shrieked and rushed aside, scarcely seeing a woman, who fell on

her knees, close by the wheels as they passed ; still the old man yelled "Faster, faster !"

Well they did their work ; and the morning had but half gone, when the yard of the "George" received them. Leaping out, Mr. G. rushed into the house, and learned that the pair had gone out to a church they named.

He turned pale as they told him, which they would not have done, had they not been certain that the time had passed, to prevent the union of the runaways. Then with a deep oath he ran out, and launched himself upon the tide of people that seemed to set full against him. Every one appeared to meet, and none to go with him ; he was tossed from side to side, held back by strong arms till their owners passed, while many turned to gaze and thought him mad, as indeed, he really was.

He had not far to go, and soon came upon a church. Without one look at its ancient walls, and turretted roof, and lofty tower, he went straight in.

There were, kneeling in front of the altar, some people ; two strangers and two that he knew well. The clergyman was pronouncing the benediction, and he was too late.

They did not see him, and it was well they did not. The words fell upon him like a thunder clap, and left him stunned—so that he passed out, and went his way, walking as if in a dream.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ceremony over, the four retired, and slowly walked back ; and, for the first time, John began to think what he had done, and what he had to do. Money he had but little, credit none, and friends but the two—those that were with him.

He had however full reliance in his own talent and powers. Possessing, as he did, a tolerable fluency of speech, and pen, he insensibly echoed the knowledge of others, and so passed into a belief that he was, not a *first* rate, but a very good *second* rate sort of person, and in fact, rather clever.

So often do young men mistake the shadow for the substance, and appropriate other men's abilities to themselves.

However, a long vision of fame and wealth passed through his mind ; and great castles full of money, and on the top of which glory-banners floated, were built up like mushrooms in his imagination ; and he even succeeded in exciting bright hopes in the bosom of his little wife.

She *was* little, and a little pretty too. One of those compact, neat figures that can dance through a heart-dream like a fairy—putting it however to much confusion and turbulence. In short she was lovely, which means to be loved, and this is enough to say; for, if I were to paint her soft cheeks, to put radiance into her eyes, or to cluster that fair hair into more beautiful shapes than ever were before, you would, dear reader, go straight away and clothe some “Mary” or “Alice” of your own experience in these bewitching ornaments, and *my* heroine would be lost in yours.

“Thomas Todkins,” was the name of our friend and John’s; and a tall, big voiced, broad chested fellow he was; with a face like a full moon, and a hand like a sledge-hammer; not afraid of any one, and one of those who hammered out life into his own shape.

To see to his friends’ welfare was his greatest happiness, for, good natured as strong-hearted, he would always neglect his own affairs for those of other people; and, as for good advice, not having had much need for it himself, he was always ready to give it away.

“First, and foremost, there are lodgings to get,” said Tom. “To-morrow is Thursday. Well, we’ll go and get some nice you place to live in, that is easily done; take possession, and have a home at once; and there you are—Friday you go to the City and get a situation, that’s easy too,” (Tom never had to look for one, consequently thought it a mere nothing), engage to go to business on Monday, and then Saturday, and Sunday—you must see the lions. You must go to the Musuem, to the Tower, to St. Paul’s, to Westminster Abbey, to Windsor, to Hampton Court, to Greenwich, and in fact, to a hundred places.

“Dinner, sir,” softly insinuated the waiter, whose white face had been peering in at the door for some minutes. So to dinner they went without delay: first, Mr. Four and Mrs. Templeman, and then Tom’s sister and Mr. John.

How gracefully that sister, thus pressed into the office of impromptu bridesmaid, did the honors of that repast. How kindly, yet how quickly, did her bright eyes see, and her little hands do every thing. Her very presence made every one happy, and, before her smiles every difficulty and doubt seemed to vanish.

“Ah! sir, she’s a jewel,” said Tom, when the girls had retired; “she’s a downright jewel; yet poor girl, she’s very lame.”

John had noticed this with keen regret, and told his friend so—“What does it matter?” replied the other. “She’s lame,

and delicate, but I'll tell you what it is, she's kind and clever, and as good as she is clever, and I love her dearly. I was ill once, and she nursed me like an angel. I was a child," (here Tom gave his broad chest a great thump), "and she used to come and sit by me, and read, and sing, and talk. I almost wish I was ill again, for the pleasure it gave me; she was very much tired by it though, and I was too ill, or too selfish to notice it."

"Tom," said the other, "we'll drink to her;" and they filled their glasses, and drank with a fervent "God bless her."

INCIDENTS OF AN ATTORNEY'S PRACTICE.

FORGERY AND FORGIVENESS.

CHAPTER I.

My first narrative will consist of the particulars of a comparatively recent incident of my practice, which extends over a period of nearly eighteen years. Not that the latest occurrence is necessarily the most vividly remembered; were that the case, memory would be but a mere machine, retaining only that which was last deposited in it. There are some events of a man's life, the remembrance of which is so nourished by associations, and sustained by the power of the affections, that an eternity of earthly existence, were such granted to man, would be insufficient to efface it. The occurrence has been deeply and strongly impressed on the mind by some circumstance of moral heroism, some instance of gigantic vice,—and the record remains as clear and fresh on the tablet, at the last hour of a man's life, as on the day the event transpired.

A client of mine came to his death very suddenly, by an accident which happened to him while hunting, and he left behind him a widow, and an only son, the latter being nine

years of age. He was possessed of a considerable landed estate, which his profusion and free living had caused him to encumber.

Beech Grove,—the family seat, is a place well-suited for the residence of a country gentleman of good income. It is not one of the very first class of country mansions, such as are usually found in the possession of the nobility and a few of the richest commoners; there is nothing vast or magnificent about it, nothing approaching to the splendour of a palace, or the distinction of a lordly residence. But, it has style and size sufficient to give it character, and a considerable degree of pretension, and to raise it above the common run of country-seats. Its architecture is that of the Elizabethan era; and there it stands, quaint and curious enough, pure, unaltered, and unadulterated by modern improvers. It is placed in a fine situation, commanding a splendid landscape, and is, with its large and beautiful pleasure grounds, and the magnificent avenue of beech that confers its name, one of the celebrities of our neighbourhood. It is situated about five miles from Mossborough, the place in which it is my lot to practice the law.

In order to save the expense of keeping up a large establishment, my client's widow, and the trustees of the property, determined to let the house and grounds until the son reached twenty one; and it was hoped that the saving thereby effected, would be sufficient, nearly, to clear the estate from debt, so that the son might enter into possession of it when he attained his majority, almost free and unencumbered. The facility that would be afforded by a residence in London, for the education of her son, was also an inducement to the widow to leave Beech Grove for a few years.

It was supposed that the mansion, from its attractions of situation, style and accommodation, would very speedily be let. The usual steps were taken by advertisements and otherwise, to procure a tenant, but upwards of two years had elapsed since the death of the late proprietor, and it still remained on the widow's hands. Many persons, both from the neighbourhood, and distant parts, looked at it,—some negotiated for it, but all declined it. It was, in fact, too good a house to let for so short a term of years; and the man who could afford to maintain an establishment corresponding with the size and character of that seat, would also possess the means, and most probably would prefer the plan of providing a residence of his own, by buying or building.

The widow and trustees began to think of altering their intentions, or at least of asking a lower rent, as an inducement to a tenant, when I received a call from an individual, who gave

his name and address as "Mr. Horde, London." He seemed to be about fifty years of age, his complexion was sallow, as though he had lived in a warmer climate than that of our little island. His eyes were remarkably dark, bright, and intelligent, and had that sort of expression which indicates broad humour combined with great benevolence and kindness of heart. There was a sly, roguish twinkle about them, that said, "I mean more than you guess—I purpose more than I choose to declare."

He stated that he had looked over the house and grounds, and then inquired the rent and term for which they would be let; and having been informed respecting those particulars, he asked:—

"When can I have possession?"

"So soon as the present occupant can make arrangements to leave the house; probably in a fortnight."

"Then I will take the place on those terms."

"Excuse me, but being an entire stranger, the trustees will expect you to furnish them with some guarantee for payment of the rent—some reference that will satisfy them that the place will be respectably tenanted."

"The house will be occupied only by myself, daughter, and servants, and the only guarantee I can give, is that which I apprehend will be most satisfactory, namely, the payment of a year's rent in advance, before I take possession."

"But that would provide only for one year's rent; whereas, the property would be secured to you for ten."

"Then I will pay every year's rent in advance, throughout the whole term."

"Your proposition being somewhat unusual, you must allow me to consult the trustees of the property, before I give an answer to it."

The trustees themselves had an interview with Mr. Horde on the following day, and urged him to give a reference, but he firmly declined to do so.

Being anxious to get a tenant for the house, and influenced in some degree by the difficulty they had experienced in obtaining one, the trustees accepted Mr. Horde's offer; a clause being inserted in the lease, to the effect, that each successive year's rent was to be paid in advance, and, that in case Mr. Horde made default in such payment, the lease should be forfeited, and himself forthwith ejected.

Mr. Horde remained in the neighbourhood until the widow removed to London, and then took possession in the month of August. Some furniture arrived from the metropolis, but the quantity was palpably insufficient to furnish the house. There were also a vast number of boxes and packages, the contents of

which were carefully concealed from the tradesmen in the neighbourhood, employed to put up the rest of the furniture; and those same tradesmen declared the house was literally only half furnished.

Then came Mr. Horde's servants; and how many were they? An old black man, and an old black woman,—not one more! Those were the only domestics that were to administer to the wants, the comforts, and the luxuries of the new occupier of Beech Grove—where six or seven times the number of English servants, most of them in splendid liveries, had formerly done suit and service. The neighbours began to smile and sneer, and to hint that both the trustees and their adviser had been completely over-reached, and had introduced an impostor into the neighbourhood; and I verily believe both clients and attorney regretted the step they had taken.

At last, on the third day after Mr. Horde's entry, his daughter arrived, and for awhile turned the scale of public opinion. She burst on the people like a vision of beauty.

"She was a phantom of delight," and might have been the original of that incomparable portrait in verse of Wordsworth. I would transcribe the whole piece, were it not that the quotation would seem strangely out of place, in these incidents of an attorney's practice. Her age was fourteen, her figure light and fragile, and in that respect she was unlike her father, who was strong, stout, and stalwart. But she had the same sly, humorous, and soft expression of the eyes, having probably caught it by gazing so long, so often, and so fondly in his face, as she was observed to do.

Not a single domestic was added to the two blacks. Only two sitting rooms, the library and drawing room, were completely furnished, and from these all strangers were carefully excluded. Such business as Mr. Horde had occasion to transact with tradesmen, artificers, and others, was attended to in a scantily and shabbily furnished apartment in another part of the house.

But some wonderful sweet sounds were at times heard to issue from the mysterious apartments, produced by various instruments and the human voice, and it was said Mr. Horde and his daughter held some delightful concerts there. But still the reason for the concealment was to be accounted for, and some motives, not very creditable to Mr. Horde, were imputed for keeping those rooms so snug. It was hinted that there were proceedings carried on in them which would blush at the light of day and public knowledge, and it was even suggested that there were more living inhabitants of Beech Grove than Mr. Horde, his daughter, and two black servants. But these were

the surmises of the malicious, and the mystery was at length in some measure cleared up, and Mr. Horde's reputation freed from all darker suspicions. It is not often that any good results from the gratification of impertinent curiosity, but this instance was an exception. Two rustics, excited to an uncontrollable pitch of wonder and curiosity, by the rumours afloat in the neighbourhood, one night boldly scaled the walls of the grounds into which the windows of the two rooms opened; a fire was blazing on each hearth, and the dim glimpse they caught of the contents of the apartments through the low blinds, was such as to convince them there was something worthy of being more distinctly seen. They tried the windows, the windows flew open, and such a mingled vision of books, birds, beasts, reptiles, and other curiosities and rarities, met the eyes of the astonished intruders, that the fellows thought they were gazing on a fairy palace. So that after all, these rooms were merely the library and museum of a man of literature and taste.

The gardens were not only kept in first rate order, but there was every appearance of their former beauty and splendour being eclipsed, as Mr. Horde introduced many rare tropical plants; and he superintended the operations of his workmen in a manner that showed he possessed both the taste of a florist, and the skill of a botanist.

Among the thorough, true bred, and unsophisticated country gentlemen, whose tastes and ideas have not been vitiated, and in whose breast there has been engendered no false pride or ridiculous hauteur, by mixing in fashionable society, there prevails a freedom, heartiness, and cordiality of spirit that gives a ready welcome to every respectable stranger who may appear among them; and Mr. Horde had not been many weeks at Beech Grove before he received visits from Sir George Sprout, and Mr. Mitford, the latter being the head of one of the oldest families in the country. They called on him unbidden and uninvited, to declare him welcome to the neighbourhood, and to invite him to join their society, and if agreeable their sports and amusements also. The fact of his being a tenant of Beech Grove, was a sufficient *prima facie* guarantee of his respectability, and they did not doubt for a moment that he was a fit associate for them. But when they found their reception room to be no other than the half-furnished, uncarpeted, uncouches, oak-chaired apartment before mentioned, and their only attendants the two old blacks, not an English servant being seen in the house, neither the gentlemanly manners and intelligent conversation of Mr. Horde, nor the beauty, gaiety, and girlish wit of his daughter, could reconcile them to the idea of receiving the new comer into their society; they thought the man was

either a fool, a madman, or a miser, and in any of the three characters was to be shunned; and having made some excuse for their call, they left the Grove with a determination that the acquaintance should not be extended. It was said that Mr. Horde's eyes twinkled with more than common drollery and humour, when he observed the look of blank astonishment put on by his visitors, on being asked to sit down in a room inferior in comfort and accommodation to their servants' halls; and that his roguish little daughter could scarcely restrain a laugh at the puzzled countenances of the two gentlemen.

So Mr. Horde was obliged to be content with the society of his daughter, whom he educated himself, and very happy and well satisfied with each other did they seem to be. They were inseparable; reading, gardening, singing, playing, or walking together the day through. Mr. Horde did not even keep a horse, and those courts and stables which but lately contained one of the first studs in the country, now never echoed to the sound of a single hoof. He and his daughter seldom went far from the house, but confined themselves to the fine scenery, and many pleasant walks in the midst of which it is placed.

After the lapse of a few months, Mr. Horde obtained the not very ready consent of the trustees to his erecting, at his own cost, an observatory, by raising one of the outhouses to a considerable height, that he might the better cultivate astronomy, which he stated to be a favourite science; and then the murder was declared to be out; he was nothing else than a half-mad astrologer. Such at least was the conclusion drawn by the lower classes in the neighbourhood, from his peculiar habits and his devotion to this particular science combined.

He was not so mad however as to forget to be very charitable to the poor, and to answer with noble liberality every call made on behalf of benevolent and religious institutions; and, though his reception room was shabby, his hospitality was said to be profuse to such as had occasion to go to the house.

It was observed that he was particularly anxious to gain information respecting the conduct and concerns of a Mr. John Spencer, who lived at a place called Roundhill, about twelve miles from Beech Grove, information which it was by no means difficult to obtain, as that gentleman, from his profligate habits, and certain other circumstances very nearly touching his reputation, was a notorious and much-talked-of character in the country.

It may be supposed that the two black servants, when they went abroad on their master's business, were pretty closely questioned and sifted as to the who, what, and wherefore, respecting him; but they kept his secrets with characteristic fidelity.

Thus passed the time, until the last day of the first year of Mr. Horde's tenancy arrived, when he called on me, and paid down a second year's rent in advance, awarding to the stipulation in the lease. The trustees had previously looked over the house and grounds, except the two prohibited rooms, and found every thing in the most perfect state of cleanliness, order, and repair. As to the bare walls and unfurnished apartments, those were matters which did not affect them, and so long as it was Mr. Horde's pleasure to occupy the house in such a state; and the indulgence of his whims led to no breach of his duty as a tenant, it was not for the trustees to raise objections.

CHAPTER II.

A FEW weeks after Mr. Horde paid the second year's rent, public announcement was made that Roundhill, where Mr. Spencer resided, and of which he claimed the ownership, would be offered for public sale. The estate consisted of about one thousand acres of land, and a modern and handsome residence. It excited no surprise that the follies, vices, and extravagances of the individual in possession of the estate, reduced him to the necessity of disposing of it, but no little astonishment was expressed that he should have the hardihood to expose to the investigation of lawyers, a title which was supposed to be not merely defective, but to be founded in gross and criminal fraud, committed by no other person than Mr. Spencer himself, and that act of fraud being nothing less than the forgery of a will.

Immediately after the sale was announced, I received a note from Mr. Horde, requesting an interview with me. He received me in the usual audience chamber, that apartment which contained not one symptom of the luxurious upholstery of the nineteenth century.

"I wish you," said he, "to attend the sale of Roundhill, and buy it for me."

"Very good, Mr. Horde, but it is more than probable the trouble will be useless, as it is almost certain that the person in possession of the estate will be unable to show a good title to it. Indeed his venturing to offer it for sale has caused general surprise. It is said there are circumstances connected with the will under which he claims the estate that will not bear investigation."

"No matter; you must purchase the estate *at any price*, however high, and the contract must be made in your own name,
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and your client must be concealed until you have my instructions to declare who is the real purchaser. But before entering into this liability on my behalf, you will no doubt expect me to satisfy you that I possess the means of paying for the estate, and I have documents in the house which would at once set your mind at ease on that point. But I ask for your confidence without such proof. I have reasons for withholding it, even from you, as my legal adviser, until I become the actual and indubitable purchaser of Roundhill. I pledge my honour the estate shall be paid for, no matter what the price, if you buy it for me."

Here was a pretty test of a lawyer's caution! To make myself personally liable to pay for a large estate on behalf of a person who might not have one shilling to meet the engagement, and respecting whom there was so much mystery—and against whom extraneous appearances were so suspicious. But there was that about Mr. Horde *himself*, which induced me at once to comply with his request. He was not a man to be disbelieved. Truth and sincerity carry conviction with them, and need no corroborative proof.

Mr. Horde's demeanour on this occasion was very different from his usual deportment; his humour and hilarity had disappeared, and were supplanted by a seriousness of purpose, a solemn earnestness of manner which took me by surprise.

The sale was held at Mossborough, and drew together a very large company of persons, some few of whom were men of capital, anxious yet fearful to purchase, on account of the suspicion attending the title. They hovered about the object of their wishes, uncertain whether to bid boldly or keep silent. These money men had been attracted by the compactness of the estate, the high quality of the land comprised in it, and the advantages presented by the house as a residence. But by far the greater number of persons were present only from curiosity, excited by the dark and suspicious circumstances which threw a doubt on Mr. Spencer's right to the property, and by the possibility that an elder brother of Mr. Spencer, who was believed to be the rightful owner, might appear and claim it at this critical moment. Such an occurrence, however, did not seem very likely, as Mr. Spencer had been in undisturbed possession of the property, without a counter claim being advanced by any individual whatever for upwards of eighteen years; so long had the will under which he claimed it remained undisputed. Still the offering of the property for sale was likely to bring forward the person who was supposed to be the real owner, if he was in existence, and hence the great local interest and excitement.

Mr. Spencer's solicitor was a Mr. Lea, from a manufacturing

town about thirty miles distant from Mossborough, a gentleman who I am sorry to say was more famous for sharp practice than fair play, and whose name for skill stood higher than his moral repute.

He conducted the sale in a disreputable manner. Being well aware of the public prejudice respecting the title, he determined to make up for any flatness in the proceedings arising from shyness on the part of bonâ fide bidders, by introducing a batch of four or five well dressed, genteel-looking puffers. These individuals were brought from a distance, and were entire strangers in Mossborough, and unknown to the company present; and their adroit employer no doubt imagined that their competition, apparently produced by an eagerness to purchase, would excite confidence in better men. These sham bidders were sprinkled about the room, and were thus made to appear as perfect strangers to each other, and all suspicion as to their real character and purpose was averted. It happened, however, that I had some slight knowledge of one of the spurious capitalists, and was aware that he had barely funds sufficient to meet the demands of his creditors in full, much less to pay for a considerable estate; and that person's presence led me to suspect the whole system on which the sale was conducted. The acquaintance, however, was not mutual, and the vaunting puffer had no idea that his true character was known to me.

The competition was at first between the sham bidders and a few men of substance; but the latter, influenced by their fears respecting the title, withdrew from the contest while the estate stood at a sum much below its value, and then the men of straw had the field to themselves. They kept up a brisk fire, and soon advanced the property nearly to its value. I had determined not to bid early, so that I might not unnecessarily enhance the price of the estate, but it was now time that I should exercise the authority my client had given me. I made a bid, and was quickly followed by the puffers, who bid against each other and myself with rapidity and apparent eagerness, as though each was fearful of losing the estate. The property very soon reached a sum which undoubtedly exceeded its value, and I then hesitated. Was I justified, I asked myself, in going on? was it right to throw away my client's money? He was plainly being cheated by fictitious biddings, which it would be difficult, if not impossible, to prove to be such, so as to obtain that relief which the Court of Chancery grants, when it is shown that puffing has been practised at a sale. Yet his instructions were imperative; the estate was to be purchased *at any price*, and, as he was not at hand to be consulted under the peculiar circumstances of the case (he had declined even to

be present in the town), I had no option but to continue my biddings. I ventured, however, publicly to express a hope that the sale was conducted fairly, and that all the biddings opposed to my own were honest and *bond fide*. This was a delicate and even dangerous step to take; but my conviction that foul play was being used was so strong that I could not help making the remark. The whole bevy of puffers immediately started up, clamorous with indignation. They had been grossly insulted; their honour had been impeached; and they demanded an apology, declaring their intention to seek redress by law if it was not made. Mr. Lea also made a formal speech to the company assembled, disowning and positively denying the practice of anything unfair, denouncing, in no measured terms, the injustice that might be caused by my insinuation, the injury it might, and most probably would, work on his client, by causing some of the respectable gentlemen who had favoured him with their biddings to withdraw their competition—to say nothing of the injurious insult offered to those gentlemen themselves, of whose respectability and competency to support their biddings by payment, he, Mr. Lea, would give a willing and unhesitating guarantee. Thus did Mr. Lea attempt to close up the wound I had made.

It would have been useless and imprudent to continue the contention, and I therefore merely expressed a hope, that if any one of the respectable individuals alluded to should become the purchaser of the estate, he would at once vindicate his reputation, and justify the eulogiums of Mr. Lea, by paying for it. The sale was then continued, the puffers working more vigorously than ever; but they suddenly ceased firing, leaving me the last bidder, and the estate was knocked down to me for eighty-four thousand pounds, being ten thousand more than had been given for it when it last changed owners, and fully that sum above its actual value. I signed the purchase contract in my own name, and paid the deposit money, with the means of doing which, Mr. Horde had previously supplied me. Mr. Lea inquired the name of the principal for whom I acted, but, in accordance with my instructions, I only stated that my client was a person who could be ready with the money to pay for the estate, when a clear title was shewn to it.

Mr. Spencer was not present in the auction room during the sale; but he entered it immediately afterwards, and received the congratulations of his attorney on the result. He was half intoxicated, a state from which he was seldom free.

“Gad, Lea,” said he, “it is rather for me to congratulate you; all is your’s, you know, above sixty-five thousand, according to bargain. Ah! you are a lucky fellow, you have managed

it well ; I see there is nothing like giving a man an interest in a thing, to ensure his best services."

Mr. Lea seemed greatly confused and annoyed at this sudden and indiscreet outburst of his drunken client, in the presence of the purchaser of the estate. Mr. Spencer, probably had despaired of disposing of the property at all, much more at the high price it had realized; and he had rushed into the room, and then incautiously and impetuously expressed his satisfaction from the excess of his joy.

"Managed, sir! interest," replied Mr. Lea, "what do you mean? The sale has been conducted with perfect fairness and regularity: and as to interest, the surplus I am to receive is only a remuneration for past services, of no trifling value *to you*, Mr. Spencer; but if you begrudge the money, the obligation can easily be cancelled; I will give up my claim to remuneration, *but the work must be undone.*"

Mr. Spencer changed his tone in a moment, and fear and submissiveness took the place of exultation.

"My dear fellow," said he, "don't say a word about it; you are heartily welcome to the money."

"Welcome! Mr. Spencer, it is my *due*, and even less than my due," answered Mr. Lea.

But he became conscious, that he, too, in his warmth and resentment, had given utterance to imprudent things, and requested his client to leave the room, until matters of business were arranged. He then apologised to me for his client's conduct, and his own irritability,—and stated that the former was under great obligations to him as a professional man.

I reported the result of the sale to Mr. Horde, and expressed my conviction that he was the victim of a well-contrived system of fictitious bidding, and informed him of what had transpired between Mr. Spencer and his attorney, after the sale; but he declared himself to be perfectly satisfied, and that it was not his intention to make any attempt to invalidate the contract I had entered into on his behalf. He only exclaimed, "Wretched, unhappy man! what slavery there is in vice and crime; and when practised to secure riches, how completely do they fail in their intended effect."

Mr. Lea delivered to me the abstract of the title in due course. That title was clear and unexceptionable, except, as to the will, by virtue of which Mr. Spencer claimed the ownership of the estate. I called on Mr. Horde, to explain to him the supposed defect in the title. On this occasion, he introduced me to the two prohibited rooms.

"Come forward," said he, "you have viewed only the shell

before, and now you shall see the kernel, which there is no further occasion to conceal."

The apartments were fitted up in a handsome and becoming manner, and were thronged and almost filled with books, specimens of Natural History, and other rarities, chiefly Indian.

I then mentioned the object of my call.

"The title to Roundhill is good and unobjectionable in all respects except as to the will of Mr. Spencer's father, which bears date about eighteen years back. It is well known that the father's family consisted of two sons, of whom the present possessor of the estate was the youngest. It is, also, well known in the neighbourhood that the eldest son displeased his father by his marriage. During the son's absence on the continent, for a few months after his marriage, the father died, and on the son's return his brother produced the will, under which he claims the estate, which purported to be signed by the father, and by which the whole of his property was given to the youngest son, except a legacy of trifling amount, which was bequeathed to the eldest son. Now, this will is supposed to be forged, and there are many circumstances that justify the suspicion; the most remarkable of which is, that by a prior and undoubtedly genuine will, this very estate was given to the eldest son; and other property, consisting chiefly of money and other personal estate, was bequeathed to Mr. Spencer. His brother left the neighbourhood immediately after his return, and has not since been heard of, and it is even suspected that he has come to an untimely end, through the foul practices of his brother. It is certainly very strange, if he be living, that he should never assert his right to the estate, which was his both by heirship and devise, and never question the validity of a will made during his absence, and under such suspicious circumstances; and the reasonable inference is, that he has come to his death by fair means or foul. However, Mr. Spencer has not been in possession of the estate long enough to give him a title to it by mere lapse of time, under the statute of limitations; and it is still in the power of his brother, if living, to come forward and claim the property, or if he be dead, such claim may be made by his children. I cannot, therefore, under these circumstances, advise you to accept the title, or pay for the estate.

It is unnecessary to say more of what passed between Mr. Horde and myself at this interview, except, that he instructed me to waive all objection to the validity of the will, to propose the deed of conveyance of the estate in a particular manner, and still to conceal the fact of his being the purchaser.

When it became known that the title was accepted without any objection being made to the will, my professional brethren in the neighbourhood expressed their astonishment. It was, they said, incredible, that I could allow Mr. Horde to pay for an estate which might at any moment be wrested from him. The only excuse that I could make was, that I acted according to my client's wish, and that future events might justify him in the course he pursued. It was said that Mr. Spencer displayed the wildest joy, and went to the most extravagant extremes of drunken delight, when he heard the title was accepted, and the estate would be paid for; and that Mr. Lea openly, and as the result will shew, most imprudently and indecently expressed his satisfaction, and declared that if there was not another fool in the profession, there was one at Mossborough.

According to professional usage, the draft of the deed of conveyance was sent to Mr. Lea for his perusal, on behalf of Mr. Spencer, before it was put on stamp, and his client called on to sign it. The name of the purchaser was left in blank; and the document was sent back by Mr. Lea, accompanied by a letter, in which he said, "I beg to return your mysterious draft, and suppose the awful mystery will be cleared up on the day appointed for completing the business."

It was arranged that the deeds should be signed, and the purchase money paid at Mossborough; and accordingly on the stipulated day, Mr. Spencer and his attorney attended at my office for the purpose of bringing the matter to a close. They both seemed highly delighted that the prize was so near their grasp, and that the precarious tenure of the estate was about to be changed for the more certain possession of gold and bank notes; and yet there was something of fear, something of trembling, and something of anxiety in their demeanour, especially, as regarded Mr. Lea, who seemed more apprehensive and doubtful than his client; the latter, indeed, being as usual, in a state of semi-inebriation, and consequently incapable of reflection, almost insensible to danger, and anxious chiefly about obtaining the means of indulging his base passions and wretched propensities.

"Well, Mr. Truman, I suppose you will now lift the curtain, and let us see the chief actor," said Mr. Lea, with what was plainly only a poor attempt at humour and indifference.

"Yes, Mr. Lea, the deed of conveyance will explain all;" and I handed him the engrossed deed.

He had no sooner cast his eyes on it than he turned pale, and trembled like a felon at the bar of justice, causing the stiff parchment which he held in his hand, to quiver like a piece of

tissue paper. His whole frame shook, and he was scarcely able to stand, and not more able to speak.

"How—why—what—how is this? Horace—Spencer! it is eighteen years since,—I thought he was dead—impossible!"—Mr. Lea could say no more, he had lost the power of utterance.

"I will explain the matter to your client, Mr. Lea. The purchaser of this estate, Mr. Spencer," I said, addressing myself to the latter, "is your brother Horace. If I mistake not, he has only purchased his own; but he gives up his legal rights, he forgives the past, he takes the estate from you only as a purchaser, he will pay you the price, which he, through me, has contracted to give for it, that you may free yourself from debt; and he requests you will accept as a gift from him, the income from the estate for the remainder of your life; this second document is a deed of gift to that effect. But he shall speak for himself; he is at hand."

I then called in Mr. Horace Spencer, for such, and not Mr. Horde, was my client's real name: he was in an adjoining room, waiting to be summoned.

His brother had sunk into a chair, paralyzed in body and mind, every limb trembling with the trepidation of guilt; his head drooping on his breast; his eyes cast down in shame and confusion, and unable to look upon his injured brother.

My client wept and sobbed aloud at the abject spectacle before him, and uttered not one word of censure, resentment, or reproach. He extended his hand in token of forgiveness, but his brother waved it from him, and exclaimed—

"No, Horace, no! I am unworthy of your forgiveness; I am guilty, I am guilty! the last will was forged, and the first one destroyed; the estate is yours, take it, and enjoy your own, and leave me to inherited beggary."

"Brother," said my client, "I forgive you, as fully and freely as a brother ought to do; and let my forgiveness obliterate the past. Now sign this deed; a kind Providence has bestowed on me abundance, without the estate; take money, and pay your debts, and continue in possession of the property as long as you live; I have but one condition to attach to the gift, that out of the income you will make some provision for your family, and that you will endeavour to atone for past errors by leading a better and more virtuous life."

"No, this hand has wronged you once by forgery, and it shall not be the means of continuing that wrong. I have been in receipt of the income for eighteen years too long. Let me go, and remove my family, and clear the house for you, and then for ever hide my head in shame."

It was generally known that John Spencer would receive the purchase-money for the estate on this particular day, and a large body of his creditors had assembled at Mossborough, in the hope of obtaining payment of their demands. Many of the debts had long been in arrear, and it was the pressure of these creditors that compelled Mr. Spencer to put the estate into the market. Some of them had sued him, and got judgment against him, and two sheriff's officers stood sentry at the door of my office, to prevent his leaving the place without either payment, or the loss of his liberty; to such a desperate state had his affairs come, and his creditors were the more numerous, and his difficulties greater, in consequence of his being unable to procure money by mortgaging the estate, an expedient, of which his doubtful title prevented the adoption. The executive functionaries of the law, being wearied of their outside attendance, entered the room, and declared their intention to execute their warrants, unless the demands were immediately satisfied. Mr. Spencer expressed his willingness to accompany the officers under arrest, but his brother interfered, and paid the demands, though against the protestations of the former. The general body of creditors had assembled at an inn in the town, and there waited the payment of their debts, according to an arrangement which Mr. Lea had made with them on behalf of his client. But their fears were excited by the delay in their debtor's appearance, (for the interview between the two brothers continued a considerable time), and they came to my office, clamorous for payment. Their claims were also satisfied by my client, to the amount, with the two previously discharged, of many thousand pounds.

And where was Mr. Lea? His fears had caused him to recover his powers, and he had fled, at the moment I left the room, to call in my client, and the reason for his fearing to stand face to face with that gentleman, will appear hereafter.

John Spencer accompanied his brother to Beech Grove, and after the lapse of a few days, yielded to his wishes. The matter was finally arranged as follows:—the younger brother received from my client a sufficient sum of money to discharge all his debts, which amounted altogether, with those previously paid, to about half the purchase-money for the estate, and the property itself was settled on him for life, and after his death it is to revert to my client. Such was the noble forgiveness, such the almost unexampled generosity, of Horace Spencer.

CHAPTER III.

It is now time that I should give the past history of the two brothers more circumstantially than it has yet been told. That of my client cannot be better related than by quoting his own words, addressed to me on the occasion of our last interview at Beech Grove, when he threw off all disguise.

"You are aware," said he, "that my father was originally engaged in trade, and that he purchased Roundhill, and retired there from business, about twenty-two years ago, his age at that time being about sixty, and the immediate cause of his retirement being the state of his health. My brother and myself were then his only children and surviving members of his family, my mother having died some years before. He wished us to carry on jointly, the manufacture that had proved so profitable to himself, but neither of us was inclined to do so, though from opposite motives, my brother devoting himself to gaiety and amusements, whilst I strolled about in the various path of literature and science. Our expectations being good, and our fortunes realised, we had no inducement in that respect to business, and I believe we were both glad of the opportunity afforded by my father's retirement, to withdraw ourselves from it. Nor was our honoured and indulgent parent very pressing that we should do otherwise, and he left us to pursue our own inclinations, without much solicitation on his part to the contrary. My brother's age at this time was twenty-two, and my own twenty-eight.

"My brother had unfortunately become connected with a gay and dissipated set of fellows, in the town where my father carried on business, and amongst them was Mr. Lea. After my father went to reside at Roundhill, my brother's time was passed between fox hunting, and other field-sports, and the vicious society of his old companions, and in that manner I understand, he has passed his life up to the present time.

"As to myself, I was then, what I am now, a dabbler in literature and science, in all their departments. A glance at my library will shew you that it contains a collection of well thumbed volumes in every walk in literature; and my little museum declares, there is scarcely one branch of natural history, that has not received some attention from me.

"I was, besides, a meddler in affairs of love. I formed an attachment for a lady, the daughter of a clergyman, whose whole pecuniary fortune was a legacy of six thousand pounds. Now, if my excellent father had a fault, it was that he attached too

much importance to wealth ; and when I told him my intended wife possessed so small a fortune as that I have named, he expressed in strong terms his disapprobation of my marrying a woman whose fortune, as he reminded me the one he should give to myself, would multiply a dozen times over. But love proved stronger than filial obligation ; and I married my Amelia, of whom my little jewel here is the namesake, and except a little foolery that she inherits from her father, the very image in mind and person. After our marriage we went into France, and stayed there a few months. When my marriage took place, we had lived about two years at Roundhill.

“ On my return, I found my father had died suddenly during my absence. My brother was in possession of all the property, real, as well as personal ; and he informed me that my father was so annoyed and exasperated at my marriage, that he made a new will immediately after he heard of it ; and thereby left me only a legacy of the same amount as my wife’s fortune, declaring, in the will itself, that I had myself supplied him with the measure of the fortune I was entitled to, in that of the woman I had married ; and the whole residue of his property, both land and money, was left to my brother.

“ I requested him to show me the will, a glance at which was sufficient to tell me it was—forged ! There was a peculiarity in my father’s genuine signature which it was impossible to imitate.

“ The only words I uttered to my brother were those of forgiveness for the wrong he had done me ; and often, when far away, have I reflected with satisfaction that they were not words of anger and reproach ; and I turned away from the house, sick at heart, and sorrowful that he should have stained his conscience with so dark a crime. Believe me when I say, that his guilt caused me infinitely more regret than the loss of the estate.

“ I was aware, from my father’s own statement to me, that he had made a will immediately after he purchased Roundhill, by which his property was justly apportioned between my brother and myself, the estate being given to me as the eldest, and my brother’s share consisting chiefly of money securities ; and I knew my dear and honoured father was incapable of doing so unjust a thing as that imputed to him. However great his displeasure might have been on hearing of my marriage, the intelligence of which I communicated to him myself by letter, he was too generous and kind-hearted to carry his resentment to the extent of disinheriting me.

“ It would have been no difficult thing to invalidate the will, and recover the estate. The only assignable cause for my

father making so sudden and complete an alteration in the arrangement of his affairs, was his disapprobation of my marriage: but the housekeeper, an old and favourite servant, who was present when he died, and who suspected the use of foul means on the part of my brother, informed me that my father died with a blessing for me on his lips—thereby showing that he was influenced by feelings, the very contrary of those that must have prompted the making of such a will as that produced by my brother; and the document had been prepared and witnessed, not by my father's usual legal adviser, but by Mr. Lea, my brother's intimate friend; and of the other two witnesses, whose names were attached to it, one was a stranger from the town where he resides, and the other a groom of my brother's.

“Probably, investigation would have led to the detection of the whole plot. But I could not have recovered my rights without implicating my brother; he must have been not only disgraced, but criminated, and transported as a felon, and I should not have been justified in pursuing a course that would have had such a result, had the whole world been at stake; the feelings of nature, the promptings of humanity, the dictates of reason, and the Divine command of unlimited forgiveness, were alike against it. I would have forfeited ten such estates to free him from guilt. Oh, it was a touching and sorrowful thing to reflect that a brother had done so foul a deed. It was a grieving and harrowing thing to be defrauded by a brother. It is at such moments, Mr. Truman—one can understand the heart-rending grief of the Hebrew bard, when he exclaimed, “*It was not mine enemy that did this, else could I have borne it; but it was thou my own familiar friend.*”

“My dear wife's little fortune now became of inestimable value; it formed our whole worldly estate, for I need scarcely say that I did not take the legacy bequeathed to me by the spurious will.

“My first consideration was, how to turn the money to good account. With some difficulty, for she was naturally reluctant to be so far separated from her friends, I persuaded my wife to accompany me to India, and there, with her legacy, I began to trade in the same commodity that my father had been accustomed to manufacture, the nature of which consequently I well understood.

“Of my Indian life I shall say little. It pleased a kind providence to bless my ventures with success, and my labours with abundant increase; and at the end of seventeen years from my first going out, I found myself possessed of a fortune nearly treble the amount of that which I was entitled to inherit from my father. I therefore resolved to return to England, and

spend the rest of my days in my favourite pursuit of a literary and scientific vagabond, strolling about, and begging a little enjoyment from each of those sources, and having no thorough or very extensive acquaintance with either. The only source of regret connected with my residence in India is, that I there lost the society, and left the remains of my dear wife; but I have some compensation for the loss in my little pearl of great price, who is our only child. My wife died only two years before I left India."

Here Mr. Spencer's daughter rose from her chair, and threw herself into her father's arms, and they mingled their tears; one mourning for a beloved wife, the other weeping for a much-loved mother.

"My poor degraded brother," continued Mr. Spencer, "had never been forgotten by me, and I only spent one night in London, after my arrival in this country, before I came down here. I was both glad and surprised to find him alive, and still in the possession of Roundhill. I had supposed that he would, by vice and dissipation, have wasted the estate, and ended his days, long before my return. Very little inquiry, however, was sufficient to convince me that his career was nearly run, the offering of the estate for sale being then talked of, and my heart beat with exultation and delight when I found that I had returned to England in time, not only to save him from beggary, but also, as I hoped, to reclaim him from vice.

"I determined to take up my abode here, as being sufficiently near to obtain information of his proceedings, and observe his conduct; and yet so distant from Roundhill, as to make it improbable I should come in contact with him. And here I have waited for the event that has transpired—the offering of the estate for sale.

"I determined also, in furtherance of my purpose, to keep close quarters, and also to assume a disguise, and with that view took the name of Horde; and, as part of my plan, restricted my stock of servants to the two faithful blacks, whom I brought over from India, and on whom I could rely for keeping my secret. It was also necessary that I should adopt the expedient which has, I understand, given rise to many strange but harmless surmises, of excluding all who were not in the secret from these two rooms, as the books and many other parts of their contents would have disclosed the real name of the owner. The consequence of the scanty display of upholstery has also been such as to further my design, by excluding me from society, and it has saved me the unpleasantness of declining individual invitations; for, I suppose, Sir George and Mr. Mitford spread abroad such an account of their reception, and declared me to be such a rare

bird, that there was no danger of my society being further courted. During the short time I lived at Roundhill, before going to India, I mixed very little in society in the neighbourhood, and the lapse of time, with the alteration in complexion from change of climate, have so completely altered my appearance, that those individuals with whom I was acquainted, and whom I have casually met since my return, have failed to recognise me. I remember visiting Mr. Mitford's father before I left the country, his son being about the same age as myself, and there was something in my voice, appearance, or manner, that seemed to strike that gentleman when he honoured me with a call, and I began to fear my purpose would be thwarted; but it seems he did not fully recognise me. In the meantime the two hermits have passed a very happy time together, and I, for my part, should be content thus to end my days, but it is necessary that my little pearl should be introduced to English society; and I fancy Mr. Truman and his clients will not be sorry to find Beech Grove furnished and tenanted in a manner more suited to its external appearance and beauty. It is truly a charming place; I wish I could make it my own.

"After being silent so long a time, it would perhaps be difficult to invalidate the will, if my brother persisted in asserting it to be genuine, which he of course would do; and the result of such attempt, if successful, would be the very one I wish to avoid, namely, to reduce my brother to beggary and disgrace. No, Mr. Truman, such a purpose has not entered my breast. I wish to buy the estate and pay for it, although it is my own by right and my father's real intention, that my brother may free himself from debt, and have an opportunity of leading a new life.

"I suspect his debts will absorb nearly the whole value of the estate, and he will therefore still want the means of livelihood, and of making a provision for his family, and for these purposes I shall give him the income from the property for his life. His past career, poor fellow, has been one of such excessive dissipation, that it is improbable he will live to see old age. At his death the property will come back to me, and form part of the fortune of my pearl of pearls; what a vast increase, Mr. Truman, of the little seed of her mother's six thousand, from which it has all sprung! In the mean time I think we can manage to do very well without it; at any rate the sacrifice is called for, and is cheerfully made."

"Dear papa," said his daughter, who was present, "why not give poor uncle the estate altogether; how can aunt and cousins live when uncle dies? Oh, I should like to see those cousins, papa; when shall we go to Roundhill?"

"Very soon now, dearest, I hope; and I will see what can be

done for aunt and cousins hereafter. I wish to induce uncle to be more economical than he has been in times past, by leading him to suppose he has nothing but the income from the estate to depend upon, to make a provision for his family."

It may be thought that it was neither sensible, just, nor kind in me, to stand by for a whole year as a spectator of my brother's final downfall, without interfering; to permit him in short to come to the very brink of ruin, before I held out my hand to save him. But you, Mr. Truman, have lived and practised your profession in the neighbourhood long enough to be acquainted with my brother's proud, overbearing, and unyielding temper; and had I come forward and tendered my assistance sooner than I am about to do, it is more than probable he would have spurned it. Moreover my great object is to work his *moral reform*, and that is likely to be best effected by my interfering now, when his difficulties are at the height; before he is reformed he must be humiliated; I wish to excite shame and remorse as the only true foundation of amendment; I mean to surprise him into goodness. It will be strange indeed if the plan I have suggested does not effect its intended purpose; it will be strange indeed if he be not grateful to him who saves him from destruction on the edge of the precipice; if he be not softened when he finds, that the man who retrieves him and his family from beggary, is the brother whom he almost reduced to it.

Thus did my client conclude his statement, his eyes twinkling with unwonted benevolence and kindness, and being brightened by the lustre of a tear; and his beautiful daughter shewed the same symptoms of tenderness. How far his noble purpose was answered, has already appeared in part, and its more perfect fulfilment will be seen hereafter.

My client's brother acknowledged in detail, the circumstances under which the forgery was committed. It appeared, that the father's death was very sudden, having been preceded only by a few day's illness. Mr. Lea happened to be over at Roundhill, at the time, on a visit to John Spencer, and he threw out a careless, and at the moment, a meaningless suggestion, that it would be an easy thing to deprive Horace of his rights; but the idle word excited evil desires, the wish grew into a settled design; advantage was taken of the combination of the three circumstances, the brother's marriage, the father's disapprobation of it, and the latter's death; and before the funeral took place, a will was framed and forged, (the signature being attached by John Spencer), ingeniously adopted by its language and date, to the above circumstances. The two witnesses who attested the document along with Mr. Lea, were paid a hand-

some bonus, and sent off to America, glad enough no doubt to escape beyond the reach of danger.

My own experience enables me to state, there was a general suspicion in the neighbourhood, that John Spencer had not acquired the estate by fair means; and his brother's sudden disappearance, and long absence, gave rise to still darker surmises, as already stated. The possession of the estate, therefore, failed to confer on him that distinction, and procure admission to that society, which a legitimate ownership and an untainted reputation would not have failed to secure. He was shunned by all respectable men of his own class, and the society he entered was that to which money alone, is at once a sufficient and the best introduction.

Is it necessary to say that—property so ill-begotten was not well spent? There were not only gross pleasures to be indulged in, and vicious desires to be gratified, but there was also the voice of a violated conscience to be stifled, purposes for which the combined income from the estate and John Spencer's own fortune proved insufficient. His conduct was marked by the grossest vices, the coarsest indulgences, the most depraved habits, and the most violent amusements.

Yes, John Spencer's punishment for his offence was severe and exemplary in this alone, that it caused him, in his vain endeavours to silence his conscience, not only to spend what he had wrongly acquired, but also that which was legitimately his own; and at the end of eighteen years, besides having incumbered himself with debts to the amount before stated, he had recklessly squandered the whole of his own fortune, the amount of which was between sixty and seventy thousand pounds.

His accomplice in fraud was his partner in the expenditure, and not only did Mr. Lea receive a handsome sum in bulk, shortly after the father's death, but also an annual payment of two hundred pounds out of the rental of the estate, which he obtained from his client by continued threats of exposure; and his final and acquitting remuneration for his evil suggestion, and still worse services, was to be the receipt of all that the estate realised above sixty-five thousand pounds, as before mentioned, Mr. Lea having thus a strong temptation to increase the selling price of the property, by fictitious biddings. Such was the manner in which the income was expended, and the estate itself parcelled out, by the two perpetrators of crime, in the absence of the rightful owner.

It should be stated, that my client's long absence abroad, led his brother and his adviser to believe that he was dead; and the estate was offered for sale, with little or no apprehension that

he would appear to assert his rights, and with the hope that his long continued silence, whether in consequence of his death, or from other causes, would be taken by the public as strong presumptive proof of the validity of the spurious will, and consequently of the soundness of John Spencer's title, and they were thus emboldened to offer the property for sale.*

It is scarcely necessary to say that Mr. Lea never appeared to claim his share of the anticipated booty. He left my office abruptly, as before stated, under the fear that his unhappy client and partner in guilt would implicate him by a confession, and that he should be brought to punishment. He concealed himself for some days, and then obtained a secret interview with John Spencer, from whom he learned that it was far from his brother's intention to expose or punish the guilty parties. He could not, in common justice, have exposed and criminated Lea, and left the chief offender, his brother, unpunished; and it was the remotest idea of his benevolent and forgiving heart, to expose his guilty relative; aye, and it was a kind, and not a prudential motive, that influenced him with respect to Lea also. But an escape from punishment does not free a man from guilt; and poor Lea was not the man to remain unmoved or unaffected by the generous and noble forgiveness of my client; it roused him also to a full sense of his error, and awakened the most acute sensibilities of his conscience. He went to the wildest extremes of dissipation; and in less than a year from the sale of the estate, became the inmate of an asylum, where he soon afterwards died. I was well acquainted with Lea, and can say, that he was a man not merely of professional ability, but of considerable genius, and would have been a bright ornament of his profession, had he not degraded his genius by vice, and abandoned all moral and religious obligations and restraints.

John Spencer is now an altered man, downcast, desponding, and dispirited; the reaction is indeed painful to witness, and instead of being a mark for censure, he is now an object of pity; but it is said, he has of late displayed some little cheerfulness of mind. He still resides at Roundhill, and receives the income from the estate, the greater part of which he carefully accumulates, as a provision for his wife and four children.

The knowledge of the forgery has not become public. The purchasing of the estate by my client at once cleared his brother

* During Horace Spencer's residence in India, communication was of course kept up with his wife's friends in England; but the latter lived in a distant county, and no intelligence of my client's existence ever reached Roundhill from that quarter. His whereabouts was in fact entirely unknown to the forgers, they being ignorant even of his having gone abroad.

from all suspicion, a result which was only consistent with the former's benevolent intention; and he is too glad to have saved his brother from public shame, to declare the real truth of the case. John Spencer's altered demeanour is attributed by his neighbours to deep and sincere contrition for a vicious and immoral life, and they know not that the chief cause of his despondency is remorse for one of the darkest crimes that can degrade humanity.

Four years of the lease of Beech Grove yet remains unexpired, and Horace Spencer now maintains there an establishment in accordance with the place, his station, and his means; a goodly number of English servants have been added to the two faithful, secret-keeping blacks, who are, however, yet their master's favourite domestics. Mr. Spencer mixes in the best society in the neighbourhood, where he is respected for his genius, virtues, and benevolence, and above all, honoured for his generous gift to his brother of the income from the Roundhill estate. His daughter has the admiration of every one for her beauty and goodness, and there is some talk of a marriage between her and Sir George Sprout's eldest son; nay, it must be considered as something more than mere gossip, as instructions have been given for the marriage settlement.

Had the reader accompanied me on a certain day in the present autumn, when business called me abroad into the beautiful country in which it is my good fortune to practice the law, I could have shewn him, (and the same group may very frequently be seen,) a man on horseback, whose age is near fifty, but who appears to be much older, riding slowly along, his head bent down, his gaze almost listless, his features haggard, and his whole countenance expressing the deepest melancholy; he heeds no objects he passes, and seems to leave his horse almost entirely to his own guidance. He is joined by two other persons on horseback, who ride briskly up to him, and greet him right cheerfully. One of them is a man, who appears to be much younger than the first named individual, but is in reality some years older; his eyes beam with kindness and compassion, and he seems delighted to meet with the new companion of his ride, alongside of whom he places himself. The other is a female, apparently about twenty; of surpassing beauty, and she manages her horse with admirable grace and skill; her eyes are fixed with a tender and sympathising look on the downcast horseman, on the other side of whom she places herself, and the three ride on together. The two outside riders enter into conversation with the other, apparently with a view to animate his mind, and cheer his drooping spirits, but with little success; he only shakes his head in a sad and melancholy manner, his words when he speaks

are few, and his smile, when he does smile, is transient, and so sad, that one wishes it had never been put on.

Need I say who the three riders are?

SWISSIANA.

CHAPTER XX.

THE FALLS OF REICHENBACH.

"It seem'd some mountain, rent and riven,
A channel for the storm had given,
So high the cliffs of limestone grey
Hung beetling o'er the torrent's way,
Yielding, along their rugged base,
A flinty footpath's niggard space,
Where he, who winds 'twixt rock and wave,
May hear the headlong torrent rave,
And like a steed in frantic fit,
That flings the froth from curb and bit,
May view her chafe her waves to spray,
O'er every rock that bars her way,
Till foam-globes in her eddies wide,
Thick as the schemes of human pride,
That down life's current drive amain,
As frail, as frothy, and as vain!"

SCOTT'S *Marmion*.

Certes the valley of Hasli is one of earth's fairest nooks! Whether it be viewed from the Brünig Pass, or whether on the opposite side within hearing of the falls of Reichenbach, the fact is beyond dispute! And then the inhabitants; the men of tall stature, and commanding port—the gentler sex, unlike the warm daughters of Ticino, or the Bernoise, with her merry, careless, laugh, one of the "blue-eyed maids" whom those romantic ballads, which are still the delight of the northern peasant on the winter evenings, the *Volkstlieder* of Sweden, first taught us to learn and love. But before we proceed, my allusion to the heroines of Frithiof will be better understood by an extract from

* Continued from p. 130, vol. lvi.

Müller's History of Switzerland, which, in volume the first, page 405,* tells us that the following tradition has been handed down from father to son since the most distant ages.

"There was an ancient kingdom of the North in the country of the Swedes and Frises, which was visited with famine. A council was held to devise measures for relief, when a motion was passed by a majority that the tenth part of the inhabitants do leave the country. All to whose lot it fell to quit their homes were compelled to obey. In this manner came it to pass that our ancestors left the North, surrounded by the tears of their relations and friends; our mothers took with them their infant offspring. Our ancestors departed in three bands, under three chiefs, to the number of six thousand men capable of bearing arms, tall as giants, with their wives and children, wealth and property; and they swore never to desert one another. In time they became rich in moveable stores, rich through the strength of their victorious arms, when they encountered on the Rhine, Peter, Count of Franconia, who threatened to oppose their passage. They asked of heaven a country such as that of their ancestors, where they might tend their herds in peace sheltered from the power of tyranny; when God led them into the country of Brockenburg, where they built Schwyz. Their numbers soon increased; there was not room sufficient in the valley, yet they considered that the task of hewing down the whole forest beside them would be too arduous, so part of the colony passed into the neighbouring territory of the Dark Mountain as far as the White Country."

From this we learn that a portion of the Canton of Schwyz was originally a Swedish colony; and were there not traditions to this day current among the peasants of that district sufficient to corroborate the truth of Müller's statement, we might with a little inquiry gather for ourselves ample proofs of the descent of a considerable number of the Forest Canton families from its northern warriors, in the numberless identity of customs and names between the two countries. The *Dark Mountain* and the *White Country* above mentioned signify the Brünig Pass and the Land of Glaciers—i. e. the valley of Hasli, which is entered from Larnen by the former, and the country, as far as Rosenlani, where the glaciers commence, or, we might even add, as far as Grindelwald. Brünig is a corruption of *Braunell* (dark corner, or dark mountain pass); and Weissland, literally rendered, means *Whiteland* (snow country, or the region of glaciers.) Added to this, one of the valleys of Hasli is called "the valley

* Zurich edition. Schiller in his *Wilhelm Tell* introduces his tradition in the scene of the Grütli.

of the Saxons (Sachkenthal); and there is a village in the island of Bornholm, near Sweden, which bears the name of Hasli.

The Hotel of Reichenbach lies outside the town of Meyningen about three quarters of a mile, and stands on the left hand of the road leading to the Falls. From the latter it is not more than one hundred yards distant; the roar of the mighty torrent of water is distinctly heard in the saloon, but it awakens no unpleasant or annoying sensation; on the contrary the charm of the scene is heightened by the constant rush of waters close at hand. The hotel consists of a clump of handsome buildings, surrounded with grounds and a small park, reminding me very forcibly of some English country-seats I had seen in Wales and Derbyshire. The gardens are well laid out, and preserved with more taste and care than is usually bestowed on the continent. Altogether I was so much charmed with my new quarters, both with regard to the luxury and to the many lovely prospects of scenery they commanded, that I decided to enjoy "*otium cum dignitate*" for a day, and give my aching shoulders a respite from their accustomed burden. To make good this resolve, I did not awake the following morning till the sun had been some few hours on the road with his coach and four.

After breakfast I made a visit to the Cascade of Reichenbach. The falls are seven in number, leaping from rock to rock; now receiving a sharp contusion from the worn point of one stone; now thrust without ceremony from the ribs of another; foaming and roaring the while as if in the magnitude of choler, till, like the loving pair in Milton's "*Allegro*," the waters light upon a "*bank of violets*," coursed along the meadow, and channel a part beneath the road until they fall with most inconsistent placidity into the river Aar.

There is a curious hill close to the Falls, from which I watched the progress of the waters as described. Upon the hill stands a genuine Swiss cottage, inhabited by a pretty widow and her child, both of whom came forward to meet me as soon as I was discovered ascending the hill. The mother accosted me in good French with the most charming provincial accent imaginable, and invited me to enter her dwelling and see the curiosities and treasures which it contained. I immediately assented, and the next moment found me in a snug little parlour with oriel windows whence the Falls were plainly visible. I told the pretty Bernese widow, that before inspecting her rarities, I should take a stroll a yard or two higher up the eminence to gain a complete survey of the cascade; whereupon she produced a spacious waterproof cloak, and throwing it across my shoulders, informed me, as I manifested some surprise, that I should find ample occasion for it, if I were bent upon enjoying a nearer view of

the Reichenbach. She was right, for I had not advanced more than a yard from her dwelling in the direction of the cascade, when my hat was saturated with spray, and I found the turf so slippery, that it was as much as I could do to preserve a footing.

Although life itself be rough and unbending, how subtle and delicate, and yet how full of influence are its phases—its lights and shades. When sunk into the gloom of despondency, imagining evils—dark and desperate, or, with a sort of suicidal *nonchalance*, careless of the future—all this perhaps the effect—the *stun* of some heart-blow—how often does a word of kindness from the lips of those we love, renew our desponding faculties; impart life within our veins, cause them to glow—

“Wie neam wein”

“as fresh with wine,” and recal hope to our souls. In an instant we are changed! Yon eye which a little ago was dull and drooping, now beams with gladness—meets the gaze of its fellows with a noble and expressive glance—and, by contrast with what it was, proclaims the power of a gentle word.

But the reader, like Darsie Latimer, may exclaim—*Cur me exanimas querelis tuis?* in plain English, why do you deafen me with your croaking? or, in still plainer Latin, *cui bono?* wherefore this harangue? What hath it in common with the cot’age, the widow, or the waterproof wrap-rascal?”

We look upon thee, gentle reader, so long at least as we bear each other company, (and here we think, the balance of advantage is with us)—as part and parcel of ourselves; a most true and faithful fellow-traveller, sharing our fatigues and perils as readily as our crust and knapsack; and, therefore will we not refuse thee the satisfaction thou demandest; for we would not especially have thee carry the impression that this quaint and startling paragraph was written to blot from thy memory, that we were upon the verge of a precipice, with a waterfall in view—*et sequitur*, on the verge of a description, which, unlike to novelists, we would pass over. There are, we are told, “sermons in stones,” yet let it not be supposed that we intended “a homily upon cascades,” or any such discourses. We did not apply the paragraph under discussion to the Reichenbach, or indeed to anything we have yet mentioned; but we inserted it, and mused upon it, because it was matter for thought while we were sliding and puffing over the damp grass; and because the pretty Bernese widow spoke kindly to us, and dried our boots for us by the kitchen fire, after our pilgrimage up the hill—thereby gladdening our hearts, which

had been soured by the difficulties of the wet turf, and otherwise cheering our spirits, which had begun to droop from want of society and conversation. We were meditating, we have a dim recollection, a plunge into the abyss—when her gentle voice awakened us to duty.

While the gentle dame was performing these, and other kind offices, (among which was the preparation of a light repast of home-made cakes), I seated myself along with her little girl at the table in the parlour where were displayed the specimens and curiosities which were for sale. Passing over some collections of minerals and petrified wood, my eye rested upon a large basket in the centre of the table filled with "notions" of carved wood. My little companion, with a turn for business beyond her years, immediately anticipated my wants; and stretching over the table, drew the basket to our side. Its contents chiefly consisted of salad-spoons and forks, garnished with flowers and mottoes of a moral character, (assimilating those which in our younger days, we were wont to copy from a series of "specimens of penmanship") on the handles—nut-crackers with comic heads, and sets of chessmen. I purchased a pair of salad scissors, and a nut-cracker.

The hostess now entered with a tray; and while she was setting out some luncheon, her little daughter induced me to make a further purchase of a Swiss cottage, beautifully carved in wood. The roof lifted up, when a complete suite of apartments (furnished) displayed itself. These curiosities, the widow informed me, were the work of a considerable portion of the inhabitants of Meyringen, and that their manufacture had become the chief trade of the valley. Travelling merchants, or pedlars, came a great distance to purchase them; the wooden models were then carried all over Europe, and found ready sale in the great towns and cities. Notwithstanding the demand, to supply which some swift process, such as machinery could effect, might be introduced with advantage, all the models, &c. are carved with a simple knife, and by the hand. Some of the more costly wares are of rich and rare workmanship, and might vie with the handicraft of the Chinese—but I have been assured they are all the produce of the hand, without any tool more cunning than a clasp knife. I could not refrain from expressing my astonishment at the delicacy of touch, and invention resulting from such simple means. Might not, I inquired of myself, this talent be employed on a more useful and profitable subject, than the carving of toy houses, and moral spoons and forks?

"And this fair young widow, with the blue eyes, and golden hair, and such a lovely daughter, the miniature of herself, who

is she?" inquired I of the landlord of the "Reichenbach," as I was paying my bill, and preparing for a quiet march in the cool of evening to Lungern. "Who is this gentle creature, with such an air of nobility, and such a lady-like deportment? How comes it that one like her, can have been reduced to depend for her bread on the sale of wooden "notions," and the chance generosity of travellers?"

"Ah! poor girl," cried mine host, "her story is a sad, though not an uncommon one. Her husband was an officer in the Prussian service; he was handsome, but he was a scoundrel. He deserted her after squandering in dissipation all her fortune."

"But," said I, "is such a man allowed to go free in the country, and live in luxury, while his wife and child have to support themselves as best they can?"

"Louise's husband was not amenable to the laws of Switzerland," answered the other.

"Was! and what is he now?"

"He is dead. Retribution followed fast upon him. He was found lying speechless across a billiard table at Baden in Germany."

"And he never recovered?"

"He never rose from that board alive. He had drunk himself to death."

"This is, indeed, melancholy. But," added I, "did his wife, Madam Louise, as you this moment styled her, did she not recover any of her money?"

"None—not a batz. The rings and jewels, the very clothes that were upon the wretched man's back, found claimants when he died. All were mortgaged."

"Whereupon Madam Louise retired here?"

"She did, *Herr Graf*. Her case excited some compassion among the charitable here, who raised a small sum for her temporary maintenance. The cottage she inhabits was constructed by the wood-carvers of Meyringen as their donation. She sells their wares for a small per centage; and now she is contented and thriving."

The evening was far advanced when I reached Lungern. The walk across the valley of Hasli through the ancient town of Meyringen was extremely pleasant; and though with nothing but my own thoughts as a companion, for I had dismissed my Lauterbrunnen guide on reaching the hotel, I found the march neither irksome nor tedious; but on the contrary, what with meditating on Madam Louise's story, and admiring the scenery which showed itself under a new aspect with every turn of the road, I was startled on being accosted by a mendicant near the toll-house at the Brunig at finding my progress had been so great.

The *Col* is 3579 feet above the sea; no great height for Switzerland, it is true, but it commanded a lovely view. At my feet was spread an extensive forest of pines, which concealed the valley of Hasli; but, as if to make amends, the tops of the trees permitted a glimpse of the opposite snowy mountain-tops, swimming over with cascades, threatening to deluge the wood, but which in reality were distant from the latter at least a couple of miles. It was a grand panorama, and I, being quite fresh and having but a small march in prospect, staid awhile to feast upon its alpine features. The toll-house is the boundary of the cantons of Berne and Unterwalden; so, bidding adieu to the Overland Bernois, I resumed the path. Scarcely was the last fine view lost sight of, than, on the other side of the Pass, another opened out itself. It was that of the valley of Lungern.

I reached Lungern in time for supper. The hotel was old fashioned and extensive, but it possessed a rambling style of accommodation, without either plan or elegance. Long corridors, broken by small flights of stairs; passages dark and narrow, leading often to nothing but a solitary apartment; how built it is impossible to guess; low-roofed bed-rooms, cold and gloomy, with uneven floors, and wide strips of window, formed of panes the size and shape of lozenges, let into small leaden frames;—these were the interior arrangements; and the outer appearance was no less quaint and inelegant. The original building, it was evident, had been intended for nothing better than an ale-house; and indeed, judging from the mean entrance, surmounted by an ivy-clad porch, and lined on either side with common pine benches, the design of the architect was in keeping with that portion; but so many wings and separate constructions had since been added to it, that the original building went for nothing in the midst, and was smothered and hid from observation by a distorted, unmeaning, and ill-planned progeny. What gave a further air of clumsiness to the whole was, that the original building consisted of stone and brick, and its adjuncts of wood and plaster. The place, when I entered, had not a single guest in it, and as I followed the *madchen* along the mountainous corridors to choose a sleeping apartment, I could not contain a thoughtful sigh at the ambition of mine host, who had converted a snug little inn, the resort and pride of the village, into a huge, rambling, and alas! *deserted* hotel.

The *moral* seems apposite, and finds its synonyme in many a tale of ambition, high or low; but in applying it to the landlord I was wrong, and had judged too hastily from appearances. The real facts of the case, as I afterwards learnt, were these:—

Before the great French Revolution the village of Lungern
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was one of the chief attractions of Switzerland. Tourists from every quarter crowded to visit it. Prior to that time such a spot was unknown beyond its neighbouring mountains. In the maps of the period its name is not even to be found. The desire to view the scenes made memorable by the recent exploits of the French; the invincible progress of Luwarrow; the gallant perseverance of the Archduke Charles of Austria; and the heroism of its own inhabitants; spread through every nation in Europe, and travellers of every description thronged the valleys and alpine passes, made ever memorable by those scenes. Among other spots, the little village of Lungern attracted the tourist. It is conveniently placed at the foot of the Col de Brunig, and is necessarily visited by those passing to and fro; but in addition it possessed, at the time to which I refer, a picturesque lake, some three miles in extent, along the western shores of which ran the road from Sarnen, and the country of William Tell, shaded with antique trees, gracefully disposed so as to afford at intervals a peep of the limpid waters slumbering at their side, and on the opposite bank bounded by almost inaccessible mountains, dropping, with rocky precipices, into the lake. The beauty of such scenes was admired, talked of, and visited in turn by fresh students of nature. The village of Lungern now became of some importance; it was noticed in "Keller's Map," and Ebel devoted an entire page of his itinerary to its merits. The lake was preferred by some to that of Thun, Lemane, Brienz, nay, even to the Waldstatter See. None were disappointed—all concurred in admiration of its beauties; there was but one drawback to its proper appreciation, and that was, the poor and scanty accommodation to be found for its votaries in the village of Lungern. "One cannot live on scenery alone."

"High mountains are to me a feeling,"

says Lord Byron; but it is well known they create likewise, a sharp appetite. Tourists will have their comforts: what could the small inn, a mere ale-house, do to feed so many mouths? Mine host of the "Schwann" found it necessary to build an extra wing—then another; and so from addition to addition, till his former habitation grew into its present rambling, uncouth edifice, which he graced with the name of "Hotel."

It was a sad day for Lungern when, in 1791, a celebrated French engineer became one of its visitors. The inhabitants had long found the want of adequate space for the purposes of husbandry, and their grievances were now to be redressed. Lungern is so entirely surrounded and hemmed in by inaccessible mountains that there was scarcely ground enough to be

found in its neighbourhood for a garden, and all vegetables and fruits, to say nothing of the more necessary wheat, corn, grass, &c., had to be brought from a distance. The French engineer came merely on a visit; he had heard of the lake, and wished to test its beauty. He was, what the world calls, "a practical man;" he saw, or conceived he saw, a use in everything. Scenery he admired; the Alps were his delight; had railways then been in vogue he would have longed to pierce a tunnel through them. He was one of those who think how much Venice would be improved by a connexion with the mainland; and has, no doubt, since heard of its railway across the *lagunes* with unmixed delight. He could admire nothing but according to its aptitude for practical purposes. He would rejoice in a tram-road to the Pyramids; and is among those who believe that the river Jordan may be made navigable for screw-steamers. Such men are, no doubt, useful in their calling, and indeed the true pioneers of civilization; among a practical people, they are master-spirits; to a "nation of shopkeepers," they are invaluable: but let them hold a *juste milieu*. In prosecuting their works, let them not deface Nature—she is a good friend; but, when abused, a stubborn foe—and she will not submit to be interfered with.

The result is soon told. He laid before the authorities at Sarnen, a plan for reclaiming soil from the bed of the Lake of Lungern. He proposed to drain its waters into the Lake of Sarnen on the eastern shore; and calculated upon gaining I know not how many acres of excellent land fit for growing potatoes on. In an evil hour the assembly assented. The engineer performed his work; but alas! with what result? The deserted halls of the Hotel—*quasi* alehouse of the "Schwann"—are sufficient answer; they tell their own tale. Lungern has gained a potato-bed, but its visitors, where are they? The engineer drained them and the lake together.

CHAPTER 21st.

NEW COMPANIONS.

Nath. "I praise God for you, sir: your reasons at dinner have been sharp and sententious; pleasant without scurrility, witty without affectation, audacious without impotency, learned without opinion, and strange without heresy. I did converse this *quondam* day with a companion of the king's, who is entitled, nominated, or called Don Adriano de Amado."

—*Love's Labour Lost*. Act 5, Sc. 1.

Three travellers arrived during the night: I found them in

the saloon when I descended to breakfast next morning; and gladly joined my meal to theirs. They proved to be a professor of a German University, and two students—one a fair-haired, blue-eyed Frankfort, (A. M.) lad, the other a young American. They were all journeying on foot *sac au dos* in the manner of the country; and as they were going to Lucern they agreed I should accompany them. We were soon on the best possible terms.

The professor was a man in whose society it was impossible to remain an hour without learning to love and esteem. His conversation was instructive, and at the same time, light and off-hand—not like that of the French, frivolous, but with all the depth and solidity of the Teutonic character, it was accompanied with their imagination—it was essentially romantic. Professor F—— was as complete an opposite to one holding the same station in England as the antipodes are far apart. He completely laid aside the scholastic toga, and in becoming the companion of his boys, entered with them into all their youthful dreams and fancies. He joined with them in their wine-songs; told stories of his college life when he was a student like them; raced with them up a hill-path; and dared them to feats of strength and agility. Then he had a word for every object; knew the history of every lake and river. Now he narrated a story of surpassing woe—now he took a page from history, and clothed it in dramatic life-like colours—now he gave a jest, or anecdote, with such inimitable *gusto* and drollery that Laughton had fairly enough to do “to hold both his sides.” Like Yorick,

“He was a fellow of infinite mirth,”

and I thanked the planets which had guided me to his acquaintance.

“Nay,” said he, with a serio-comic air, “you should thank rather the sun.”

“Alors?”

“In me you behold Aladdin the Second.”

“Your credentials?”

“This roc’s egg,” cried he, decapitating a genuine bantam.

“Good! And now,” said the Frankfort student, “perhaps your majesty will explain how this gentleman is indebted to the sun for a smile at your levee?”

“Is he not, like the rest of ye, a slave of the lamp?”

“Stage—midnight—or candelabra?”

“None: hear me! This is a figure. I am Aladdin the Second—master of the lamp. The lamp is the sun—the ring, the circle in which revolve the eleven planets, of which our earth is one. All the planets are inhabited by your species—

man ; but as they differ in proximity to the sun, so do you in character to each other. Earth being a centre globe, contains nought but mediocre talent—this is Menzel's theory."

"It may suit Wolfgang Menzel, for accordingly under the figure of modesty he arrogates to himself equal genius with the great men of our earth. Homer, Goethe, Schiller, are not then of this world?" inquired the Frankfort lad.

"Nor Washington and Franklin?" added the Yankee.

"Nor Milton and Byron?" added I.

"They belong to other planets—probably those nearest the sun—but perhaps they are universal. If not, Mercury should be inhabited by Shakspeares—Venus by Franklins - and so on, according to merit. You, Master Frankfurter, are, I should say, a runaway 'prentice of some thickheaded citizen of Uranus or Herschel.

We all laughed heartily at this allotment, I told the professor I should take down the address of the several planets, and certainly recommend, on my return home, all our dramatists to pay a visit to Mercury, the world of Shakspeares.

"Aye," said he, "they may do so to advantage. We Germans can vouch for the fact; witness our Schiller and Goethe."

"True! they set a good example, and were rewarded. But those two names are all you have to offer of truly great."

"Such is the vulgar opinion, and, as a foreigner, I am not surprised at your subscribing to it; but, had we not had Lessing, probably we should never have had either Schiller or Goethe. In the last century German literature was a *galimathias*—a fable—there was no such thing. Nothing but French would pass. Voltaire was Frederic's oracle and table (*petit-souper*) companion. He was *chambellan du roi* and censor of the press. Like Goldsmith's threadbare friend, a German actor or singer attracted no audience; people went to the theatre not for the play, but to see the philosopher of Ferney. All eyes were turned on him; his every movement was watched. If he cried, "Bien!" the whole house applauded; if he shook his head, the actor was condemned. You have read 'Wilhelm Meister,' probably? You recollect, then, the players at the castle, and the prince who loved so much the French drama that Meister, to gain his favour and attendance at his pieces, was advised to extol Racine and Corneille without bounds. Meister did so, and eloquently, for he was in earnest: the prince was delighted. But, when Jarno placed Shakspeare in the hands of our poet, how did *Messieurs les Francais* fare? The following book of the 'Apprenticeship' is almost wholly occupied with a critique upon Hamlet.

Since that hour, Meister abjures the French school, and follows the *barbarian*, as Voltaire styles your Master William Shakspeare."

"I understand you, professor," said I. "In this extract from the 'Apprenticeship,' you refer to the change wrought upon German literature by the study of Shakspeare."

"Yes: and by whom was the change effected? By Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. He it was who first shook off the thralldom of France, and by his own writings showed to the world what a German could produce."

"True: and like all sudden changes, you have gone to extremes. Before that period, German literature was said to be devoid of interest; it had neither wit nor imagination: now those two qualities colour it like a huge abortion. Your writers have out-fancied fancy. In thinking to surprise her in her towers, you have chosen over lengthy scaling ladders. You have attempted too much, thinking that you had real wings, while they were but waxen ones which the sun melted, and you have dropped into the ocean. You conceive that in extravagance lies imagination. If a writer depicts the life of an elephant, for instance, peoples it with images monstrous as the creature, describes a republic of such animals, and the fashions, follies, and incidents which might be supposed to exist therein, he is immediately set down as "a mighty poet" (it is almost unnecessary to state that the work should be in *verse*), and an original thinker. Allow, *Herr Professor*, that my picture is not an incorrect one." *

"In but too many instances, I fear, it is a faithful representation of the besetting sin of our authors. But, Mr. Englishman, tell me, are not some of your best living authors also tainted with the same folly?"

Having seen "*Sartor Resartus*," and others of the *beautifullest*† works of the same indigestible school, I was silent: and here ended our conversation.

We breakfasted early, and quitted luncheon together. Our path lay along the side of the dried-up lake for about half a league, when we began a very steep and winding descent into a beautiful valley, with a lake—a magnificent sheet of calm, blue water—glittering in the centre. We hurried on to Sachsen, by advice of the professor, who thought we might arrive in time to witness—and even to share in—the athletic games, which are annually held there. These sports were originally strictly national, but they have latterly grown into a

* The *Reinecke Fuchs* of Goethe, of course, we except in this sweeping censure—indeed, it bears out our assertion of the monstrosities of modern German literature; for it, this language of quadrupeds has set an example unapproachable as yet to many an aspirant after literary renown.

† I acquit Lindley Murray of having taught me this superlative. My authority is Mr. Thomas Carlyle, guilty of "A French Revolution."

sort of *fair*, being attended by mountebanks, and itinerant spectacles of every description. The Swiss portion, however, is still preserved, and consists of cross-bow and rifle shooting, and "throwing the stone," a species of quoits, common also in the Highlands of Scotland. We arrived, to our great regret, too late for the festival—*schwingfest*, as it is called: it had been celebrated the week before.

At Sachslen we were reminded that we were in a catholic country, by a procession, headed by a priest, and accompanied with a tinkling of bells in the church-yard as we passed. The people of Unterwalden are, the professor assured me, among the most bigoted followers of the Romish ritual. The inhabitants of Sachslen seemed poor, and all the females we met, were very plain-looking. The church and the village, which is picturesque, are the only striking features about Sachslen—the former is really an elegant building, and is rendered particularly interesting, as being the receptacle of the last earthly remains of Nicholas von der Flüe, whose shrine even to this day attracts many a devout pilgrim. The sepulchre is still in good preservation; the carving and sculpture being unimpaired by age or the pilfering touch of the relic-hunter; and even the tunic, worked by the hermit's own hands, is to be seen under a glass case beside the tomb.

This extraordinary man, whose celebrity, however, is wholly owing to his timely interposition at Stantz (for he was one among the many hermits of that romantic age, and therefore might have passed unnoticed in the crowd) was born at Flüeli near Sachsen, in March, 1417. His real name was Nicholas Lowenbrugger, and it was only changed to "von der Flüe" and titled with a *sainthood* after his death. He was a peasant-soldier in early life, and could handle the plough, or the sword, equally well as occasion and duty called. Having passed the prime of life, and seen a numerous family well educated in every religious and scholastic virtue, he became a hermit, retiring to the solitudes of Melich-Thal and the borders of the Raulf, where he dispensed advice and consolation to those who sought it. When Berne, Zurich, and Lucerne met at Stantz, to propose the admission of Friburgh and Soleure into the Helvetic Confederacy, and their motion was negatived by the three Forest Cantons, Nicholas von der Flüe rushed into the assembly, and in an eloquent speech besought them to be of one mind, to uphold the ancient unanimity of Switzerland, and not to disgrace the names of their forefathers by dissensions which might lead to that, the most fatal of all scourges, a civil war. The spectacle of the aged man coming from his retirement to take part in the assembly, the renown of his learning, and his

character for piety, had powerful effect upon his hearers; and the Convention bowed to his decision, which was in favour of the candidate-cantons. Friburgh and Soleure were admitted into the confederacy; and Nicholas von der Flue retired for the last time into his solitary retreat, where soon after he died, at the age of seventy years. His descendants, it is said, are still to be found among the families of the neighbourhood.

At noon we came in sight of the lake of the four cantons—or, as the *citizens* love it to be called—the lake of Lucerne; and after another hour's march, reached the small port of Alpnacht, where we took ship for Lucerne. The vessel was not unlike a large, flat-bottomed English punt, only its bows had some pretensions to shape, and was equally unsightly. I was thinking how awkward it would be, should a storm arise, which is a very frequent and sudden occurrence on this lake, as all readers of history should know, in remembrance of a *great episode*, when the discipline of the crew, and the ease with which they managed their charge, immediately dissipated all fears. Four of them, hard-featured, spare, wiry-looking women, with prominent cheek bones, their hair brushed straight back from the forehead, and secured in such a tight knot on the crown, as seemingly to stretch each particular lock from its very root, rowed with a will and to good purpose; while an old man had the guidance of the bark, which he steered simply with an oar. Could the petticoats, very short ones, modest reader—could the petticoats have been the daughters of the venerable coxwain, thought I? Be that as it may, of one thing I was quite certain, that though the fair *bateliers* did not display much science in their pulling, nor feather their scull like, I was going to add, a Red Indian, but this would be an outrageous pun, without even an application, and therefore it shall remain between me and *il diavolo*—no offence, the printers! I mean a *Coombes*, or a *Phelps*. I should much rather receive a blow from many of my own sex than from the arm of any of the above, especially remembering that I might not return it. However, in this case, they applied their powers to the propelling of the vessel, and with such effect, that in less than two hours we entered the arrowy Reuss, and in another found ourselves seated at the *table d'hôte* of “Les Balances,” and in the possession of, perhaps the most comfortable quarters in Lucerne. But the city and its environs we will describe in a separate chapter.